THE SAINTS DAILY EXERCISE.

A Treatiſe,
Vnfolding the whole Duty of PRAYER.

Delivered in five SERMONS, upon 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 17.

By the late Faithfull and Worthy *Miniſter of* IESVS CHRIST,
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The Ninth Edition, Corrected.

The effectuall fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, Iam 5. 16.
If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not heare my prayer, Pſal. 66. 18.

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To the Reader.

Courteous Reader,

TO discourse largely of the necessity and use of this piece of spirituall armour, after so many learned and usefull Treatises upon this subject, may seeme superfluous, especially considering that there is much spoken to this purpose, for thy satisfaction, in the ensuing Treatise; wherein besides the unfolding of the nature of this dutie (which is The Saints daily Exercise) and strong inforcement to it, there is an endeavour to give satisfaction in the most incident cases, want of cleering whereof is usually an hindrance to the cheerefull and ready performance thereof. In all which, what hath been done by this reverend and worthy man, we had rather should appeare in the Treatise it selfe, to thy indifferent judgement, than to be much in setting downe our owne opinion. This we doubt not of, that, by reason of the spirituall, and convincing manner of handling this argument, it wil win acceptance with many, especially considering, that it is of that nature, wherein, though much hath been spoken, yet much more may be said with good relish to those that have any spirituall sense: for it is the most spirituall action, wherein we have neerer communion with God, than in any other holy performance, and whereby it pleaseth God to conveigh all good to us, to the performance whereof Christians find most backwardnesse, and indispositednesse, and from thence most dejection of spirit; which also in these times is most necessary, wherein

unleſſe we fetch helpe from Heaven, this way we ſee the Church, and Cauſe of God like to bee trampled under feet. Onely remember that wee let theſe Sermons paſſe foorth as they were delivered by himſelfe, in publik, without taking that liberty of adding or detracting, which, perhaps ſome would have thought meet: for wee thought it beſt that his owne meaning ſhould be expreſſed in his owne words and manner, eſpecially conſidering there is little, which perhaps may ſeeme ſuperfluous to ſome, but may, by Gods bleſſing, bee uſefull to others. It would be a good prevention of many inconveniencies in this kind, if able men would be perſwaded to publiſh their owne workes in their life time, yet wee thinke it a good ſervice to the Church, when that defect is ſupplyed by giving ſome life to thoſe things, which otherwiſe would have dyed of themſelves. The bleſſing of theſe Labours of his wee commend unto God, and the benefit of them unto thee, reſting,

Thine in our Lord Ieſus Chriſt,

RICHARD SIBBS.

IOHN DAVENPORT.

THE

THE CONTENTS OF THE Enſuing TREATISE.

Page.

THE words opened, wherein are three things. 2
1 What Prayer is. *ibid.*
2 Why the Lord will have us pray, for 7. reaſons. 11
3 What it is to *pray continually.* 15
Prayer twice a day, the grounds of it. 16
Wicked men their miſery. 18
Motives to prayer 8. 19

Objections againſt Prayer.

Objection againſt time ſpent in prayer, anſwered 3. wayes. 32
Object. againſt prayer in reſpect of unfitneſſe, anſwered two wayes. 34
Objection concerning difficulties to pray, 7 mentioned, and their remedies. 36, 39
Object. againſt prayer, God knowes our wants. 41
Object. from Gods purpoſe to beſtow things anſwered 2 wayes. 42
Object. that God is not changed by our endeavours. 44
Object. wicked men enjoy bleſſings without prayer, anſwered three wayes. 46
Objection that the godly pray and ſpeed not, and the reaſons. 50
When wee pray to ſpend on our luſts. 52
God grants not our prayers in our manner. 54
Not by our meanes 56
Nor in our time. 59
God deferres to grant our requeſts for 4. reaſons. 64
6 Dangers in neglecting prayer. 70
9 Caſes of conſcience concerning prayer. 71
1 Caſe about wandring thoughts, 4. cauſes of them. 72
2 Caſe concerning dulneſſe, with the cauſes of it. 74, 75
3 Caſe of praying after ſome great ſinne, 3. reaſons for it. 76
4 Caſe concerning a ſet forme of prayer. 80
5 Caſe concerning voice and geſture in prayer. 84
6 Caſe of ſtraitneſſe of time, 5. cau-

tions in it. 88, 90
7 Case for use of meanes, 4 reasons of it. 92
3 Cautions in using meanes. 94
8 Case cõcerning praying in faith 98
9 Case of knowing whether our prayers be heard or not. 100

7 Conditions or qualifications in prayer.

1 Condition, the person must be right. 101
2 Condition is faith, and what faith is required? 105, 106
3 Condition fervency, with cautions concerning it. 115
4 Condition humility, 4 reasons of it. 122
5 Condition holinesse, in 3 things 126
6 Condition thankfulnesse. 137
7 Condition, to come to God in the Name of Christ. 140

A View of the Scriptures alledged and opened in this *TREATISE*.

Booke.	Ch.	Verse.	Fol.
Genes.	32	10	122
Levit.	5	11	142 143
Levit.	16	12 13	43
Levit.	17	3 6	42
Deut.	8	11	25
1 Sam.	1	15	6 83
2 Sam.	7	11 18	42 123
1 King.	18	41 42	42
1 King.	22	31	39
2 Chron.	7	14	122
2 Chron.	10	12	110
2 Chron.	14	11	ibid.
2 Chron.	26	16	10
Nehem.	1	11	21
Iob	15	4	28
Iob	22	21	13
Psal.	4	3	103
Psal.	22	4	112
Psal.	38	16	66
Psal.	51	16 17	124
Psal.	146	5 6	107
Prov.	30	8	5
Isay	45	4	48
Isay	66	2	122
Ezek.	36	31	125
Dan.	6	3	16
Dan.	6	10	20
Dan.	9	3 4	42
Hosea	7	14	3
Mal.	3	10	32
Mat.	7	7	108
Mat.	15	28	124
Mat.	26	41	9 24

Booke.	Ch.	Verse.	Fol.
Luke	18	14	125
John	4	24	86
John	16	24	22
Acts	13	22	123
Rom	8	27	3 10
Rom.	12	11	120
1 Cor.	10	12	15
1 Cor.	12	9	55
2 Cor.	6	9	130
2 Cor.	8	12	34
Ephes.	6	18	19 23
Phil.	4	6	22 13
1 Tim.	2	8	104 126
1 Tim.	4	4	175
Tim.	6	9	51
1 Tim.	1	3	15
Hebr.	3	12	79
Hebr.	5	7	69
Hebr.	9	24	144
Hebr.	10	2	128
Hebr.	10	22	130
Iames	1	5 6	105 106
Iames	3	9	86
Iames	4	3	51
Iames	4	6	122 125
Iames	4	13 14	140
Iames	5	13	23
Iames	5	15	21
Iames	5	16	102
Iude	1	28	13
Revel.	2	10	64
Revel.	3	8	67
Revel.	8	3	11

THE SAINTS DAILY EXERCISE.

The first Sermon.

1 Thess. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

THe Apoſtle here, in the latter end of this Epiſtle, heapes up many precepts together, and therefore wee ſhall not neede to ſeeke out the dependance of theſe words from thoſe that goe before, or thoſe that follow after. *Rejoyce evermore,* (ſaith hee;) *Pray continually. In all things*

give thankes: for this is the will of God in Christ Iesus to you-wards.

We are now fallen upon this Text, where this duty of prayer is commended to us, and it is a command from *God* himselfe delivered shortly, as lawes are wont to bee, without any great premises and reasons, and indeed, hath therefore the more authority in it.

Pray continually.

3 Things considerable, for opening of the words.

IN the handling of which, wee will doe these three things.

First we will shew you what *Prayer* is.

Secondly, why the *Lord* requires this at our hands; for a man might object, the *Lord* knowes my wants well enough, hee knowes my minde and how I am affected? I, but yet the *Lord* will have us to *pray*, and to aske before he will bestow it upon us.

And lastly, what it is to *pray continually*.

1 What prayer is.

1 In generall.

For the first, if wee would define *prayer* in generall to you, I would give you no more but this description of it; *It is an expression of the minde to the Lord:* sometimes by words, sometimes without words, but yet there must bee an expression, and some opening of the will to him. This is the generall.

2 In speciall.

But now to know what a right *prayer* is, what such a *prayer* is, as *God* accepts; you must have another definition which must have more ingredients into it, and so, *Prayer is* (nothing else but) *an expression or offering of those holy, and good dispositi-*

ons

ons to God, that ariſe from the Spirit, or the regenerate part, in the Name of Ieſus Chriſt. Where you are to obſerve this; That the *prayers* which wee make, are divided into one of theſe two ſorts:

Diviſion of prayers into two ſorts.

First, ſome are ſuch *prayers* as are the expreſſions of our owne ſpirits, the voyce of our owne ſpirits, and there is nothing but fleſh in them; ſuch prayers any naturall man may make to the *Lord:* and theſe the *Lord* regards not, he knowes not the meaning of them, that is, hee doth not accept them.

1 Such as come from our own ſpirits. *Note.*

Secondly, there are prayers that are the voyce of *Gods* owne Spirit, that is, ſuch as ariſe from the regenerate part that is within us, which is quickned and enlarged to pray from the immediate helpe of the *Holy Ghoſt*; theſe prayers are onely accepted, and of theſe it is ſaid, *He knowes the meaning of the Spirit:* that is, he ſo knowes it, and ſees it, that alſo he accepts it. Therefore you ſhall ſee in *Hoſea* 7. 14. when they prayed, and prayed earneſtly, yea, not only ſet a day apart for prayer, but alſo called a ſolemne Aſſembly, and kept a faſt, yet, ſaith the *Lord* plainely, *Yee did not call upon mee when you howled upon your beds; for* (ſaith he) *you aſſembled your ſelves for Corne, and for Wine;* which any naturall man may doe: And therefore (ſaith he) it is but an *howling*; it is as the voyce of beaſts, to ſeeke for wine, and oyle, and corne; but no prayer, for he ſaith plainely, *You called not upon me,* when notwithſtanding, they ſpent a whole day in prayer. The meaning is, that the *Lord* regards this as no prayer at all.

2 Such as come from Gods Spirit.

Rom.8.27.

Hoſea 7.14.

Prayer of wicked men how lings.

The termes of the description opened.

And therefore to open a little this description unto you, (for it is one maine businesse that wee have to doe, in handling of this Text, to describe to you the meaning of this precept, What the nature of *prayer* is;) that you may know what kind of *prayer* it is, that prevailes with *God*. I say, *It is an expression of holy and good dispositions*. I use that expression rather of *dispositions*, than *desires*, because there is some part of *prayer* that stands in thankesgiving, when you desire nothing at *Gods* hands: but give thankes for that you have received; marke, first, that they must be *holy* and *good*, the desires and dispositions must bee good: for that is a rule, *All the affections and desires are good, or evill, according as their Objects are*; those that are fixed upon good things, are good desires.

1 Why he useth the word (*disposition*) rather than desires.

When the desires and dispositions of men are good.

Quest. You will say then, what are the good things that make the desires and dispositions of the heart good?

Answ. They are temporall things, and spirituall both. A man may pray for temporall things in a spirituall manner, and the desire may bee good; and againe, he may pray for spirituall things in a carnall manner, and the desire may bee naught. Therefore that must bee observed withall, that it is not simply the object, but there is a certaine manner of desiring too: for example, if a man pray for temporall things, for outward comforts, such things as belong to the present estate of his body here; if he pray for them with these conditions, that hee may have that which is convenient

That temporal things may be desired in a carnall manner, and carnall things in a spirituall manner and how.

ent

ent for him, he prayes for such a measure as GOD sees to be meet, as *Prov.* 30. *Feed mee with convenient food for mee*; this praier is good. But (*if any man will be rich*, as 1. *Tim.* 6.) it is an inordinate desire, when men will have excesse of these outward things, and more than is fit for them. And again, if you desire that which is *covenient*, and *spend it upon your lusts*, if you desire health, and long life, that you may live more pleasantly, if you desire wealth, that you may live more deliciously, and not simply that which the creature may desire, and to the end that you may be the more inabled to serve the *Lord* in these things, your desire is not good. So I say, first it must be for that which is *convenient*, secondly, you must not *spend it upon your lusts*, but in *Gods* service.

Prov. 30. 8.

1 *Tim.* 6. 9.

When the desire of outward things is good.

And lastly, wee must pray for them in a right method, *First seeke the Kingdome of God, and then other things*, that is, Chiefely, and in the first place, pray for Spirituall things, and then afterwards for Temporall in order unto them. Wee should so pray for temporall things, as our praiers may be spirituall. On the other side, a man may pray for spirituall things in a carnall manner, as for temporall things in a spirituall manner. A natutall man may pray earnestly for faith, and for grace, and repentance, not out of any beauty that he sees in them, not out of any taste and relish that hee hath of them, but because hee thinkes them a Bridge to leade him to Heaven, and that he cannot come thither without them: when he considers in his heart that he cannot bee

How a carnall man may pray for grace.

saved without these things, I say, then hee may desire them, and that earnestly. It was the case of *Francis Spira*, who cryed so earnestly for grace, that hee might have but a drop of it, because hee could not be saved without it; and hee gives the reason himselfe, when he said withall, hee saw no excellency in it, hee desired it not for it selfe, and therefore hee thought his prayers should not bee heard. Thus you see that prayer is an *expression of holy and good desires*.

Spira his case.

These desires must be offered to God.

Againe, it is *an offering them up to the Lord*: But I will not stand upon that (you are well enough instructed in it) that whatsoever petition is made to the creature, is not a prayer; it must onely be offered up to the *Lord*.

Arising from the spirit, or regenerate part.

Then I adde, it is an expression of such desires as must *arise from the regenerate part*, that is, looke how much there is of the *regenerate part* in a praier, looke how much the *holy Spirit* hath to doe in it, looke how much comes from that which is called the *inward man*, so farre it is sanctified, so far that praier is accepted, and no further. But, that we may open this a little more fully, we will shew you it by some other expressions of prayer, that we finde in the Scriptures.

Expressions of Prayer in the Scripture.

Prayer is called a *lifting up of the heart to God*, *a powring forth of the soule to the Lord*, 1. *Sam.* 1. 15. *A serving of him in spirit*, so *Paul* calleth it. Now if we open these phrases a little, you shall know more fully wherin the nature of right praying to God consists. That phrase the Apostle useth (*whom I serve in my spirit*) is the same word in the origi-

1 Sam. 1. 15.

nall

nal that is used for fasting and prayer. Now what is it to pray to *God* in the spirit? for we may say, a man cannot make a prayer, but there is an act of his minde goes to it, and every man, what service soever he performes, his spirit must needs have a hand in it, so that it cannot bee performed without the minde.

I take this to be the meaning of it, for the Apostles scope is, to distinguish the true and holy service of *God* from those that are but shadowes and counterfeit, and as it were, but the body and carcasse of right service. Therefore, when he saith, *I serve the Lord in my spirit*, or, *I pray in the spirit*; the meaning is this, the prayer of a man is not onely that which the understanding dictats to him, but when the whole soule, the wil & affections go together with his petition, and whatsoever the petition is, a mans heart is affected accordingly. As for example, If a man come to confesse his sins, & yet slights them inwardly in his heart; if a man pray for reconciliation with *God*, and yet have no longing and sighing in his heart after it; if he earnestly aske grace, and the mortification of sinfull lust, when the heart doth not inwardly seeke it, now he prayes not in the *spirit*. To pray in the *spirit* is as that in *Ioh.* 4.24. *Hee will bee worshipped in spirit and truth*: the meaning is, so to pray as the heart go together without petitiō. The same also is the meaning of that when a man powreth forth his soule before the *Lord*: So *Hannah* saith of her selfe, *I am a woman troubled, &c. and powre out my soule before the Lord*: which is not when a man deli-

To serve God in the spirit, what.

Iohn 4.24.

To poure out the soule to God, what.

vers to God that which the understanding and mind hath devised only, (for prayer is not a work of wit, or of memory) but when a man powreth forth his whole soule (that is) his will and affections, when they goe together, and there is no reservation in his minde, but all within him is opened and explicate, and exposed to the view of the *Lord*, not as *Austin* saith of himselfe, when hee came to pray for the mortifying of his lusts, saith hee, *I had a secret inward desire that it should not bee done.* Therefore when the *soule is powred forth*, the meaning is, that all must bee opened to him; so that when a man will make an acceptable prayer, hee must make this accompt, hee must then call in all his thoughts and affections, and recollect them together as the lines in the centre, or as the Sun-beames in a burning Glasse, and that makes prayer to be hot and fervent; whereas otherwise it is but a cold and dissipated thing, that hath no strength or efficacie in it.

Austin.

Simile.

Now this withall you must know, that when wee say the whole soule must goe together with the petition, the meaning is, that not onely the will and affections be imployed, (for in a naturall man, in his desire of health, when he is sicke, or wanteth assistance & guidance in difficult cases, not onely the understanding, but the will and affections are busie enough it is likely) but also wee adde further that that which is called the *spirit*, and is diffused through the whole soule, be set on worke also in the performance of this holy duty to the *Lord*, whensoever we seeke to him in prayer.

Note.

For

For this you muſt know, that there are two things in a regenerate man, (for you muſt take for granted by the way, that no naturall man is able to make a prayer acceptable to GOD, ſeeing there is no ſpirit in him, but in the regenerate man) there is, I ſay, fleſh and ſpirit: now when we come to poure forth our hearts to the *Lord*, that which lyes uppermoſt, will bee ready to be poured forth firſt, and that which is ſpirituall, it may be lies in the bottome, and is kept in; ſo that a man may make a carnall prayer, though he bee a holy man; that is, when the fleſh hath gotten the upper hand, as in ſome fits it may, when the mind is filled with Worldly ſorrow, and Worldly rejoycing, and Worldly deſires, and theſe (lying uppermoſt) will bee ſooneſt expreſſed: ſuch a prayer the *Lord* regards not, though the man be holy, from whence it comes: but right prayer is this; when the regenerate part is acted and ſtirred up, and the fleſh that alwaies hinders, is removed. For you muſt know this, that whereſoever there is a regenerate part in any man, there is a great aptnes in that to call upon *God*, and it cannot be disjoyned from it, but that is not alwayes in act.

Two things in a man regenerate.

No naturall man can make an acceptable prayer.

A holy man may make a carnall praier.

Right prayer, what.

As we ſee a fountaine, it hath alwaies an aptnes to poure forth water, it is ready to breake into a current, but if it be ſtopped with ſtones and mud or other impediments, it cannot breake out: ſo he that is a regenerate man, that hath a holy part in him, there is an aptneſſe to prayer. Which is that which our Saviour ſaith, *Mat.* 26. 41. *The ſpirit is willing*, that is, there is alwaies a willingneſſe

Simile.

An aptneſſe in the regenerate part to prayer. *Mat.* 26. 41.

How the ſpirit helpes our infirmities, *Rom.* 8. 27. *Simile.*

neſſe that followes the ſpirit, or the regenerate part in a holy man, but, ſaith he, *the fleſh is backward*, that is it that ſtops this fountain, and therefore *Rom.* 8. 27. *The ſpirit* is ſaid there *to helpe our infirmities, and to make our requeſts for us*, that is, even as a man removing ſtones from a fountaine with his hands, makes the Water a paſſage to breake out into a current; ſo the *Holy Ghoſt* removes this fleſh, which ſtops up the current, the *ſpirit* takes away thoſe carnall impediments that are in us: and not onely ſo, but ſtirreth up the regenerate part; and when that is done, wee are able to make a ſpirituall prayer unto *God* in *Chriſt Ieſus*; So, that is the thing that you are now to obſerve, that the *Spirit* muſt helpe our infirmities, when we come to call upon GOD, and our praiers be ſo far acceptable as they bee the fruits of the regenerate part; now wee want but one thing added in the definition.

Offered up in the Name of Ieſus Chriſt.

They are ſuch Prayers as are offered to God in the Name of Ieſus Chriſt.

2 *Chron.* 26.

This is a thing that you all know, that thoſe prayers that are not offered up in Chriſt, are not acceptable, becauſe the perſon is not regarded. It was the ſinne of *Vzziah* in 2 *Chron.* 26. Hee would goe to the Temple himſelfe being a King on the Throne, and he would offer incenſe without a Prieſt. We doe the very ſelfe-ſame thing, whenſoever we goe to offer up any prayer to *God* without *Ieſus Chriſt*. In the old Law men might bring their ſacrifices, but ſtill the Prieſt muſt offer them; ſo muſt we here, and the reaſon is given,

ven, *Revel.* 8. because the prayers that come from us savour of the flesh, from which they come: and the Angell of the Covenant *mingleth much incense with them*, and makes them sweet and acceptable to *God*, *with much incense*; that is, as the flesh is more, so there needs more incense, that they may be made acceptable to *God* the Father. So that we have indeed a double intercessor; one is, *the Spirit that helpes our infirmities*, that helps us to make our petitions, that quickens and inlargeth our hearts to prayer: The other is the *Intercessor* to make them acceptable to *God*, that hee may receive them, and not refuse and reject them. So much shall serve for the first thing, to shew you what the duty is, what a right, true, and acceptable prayer is.

Revel. 8. Why we must offer our prayers in Christs Name.

Intercessour double.

Now for the second, *why must we pray?* For this objection a man may make, the *Lord* knowes my minde well enough, and what needs such an expression of it by prayer? The reasons briefly why the *Lord* will have us to pray, are taken;

2 Why the Lord will have us to pray, seeing he knowes our wants.

Partly from himselfe.

And partly from us.

1 From himselfe, though he be willing to bestow mercies upon us, yet he will have us aske his leave before he gives thē. As (you know) fathers do with their children, though they intend to bestow such things upon them as are needfull, yet they will have their children aske them; and as it is a cōmon thing among men, though they be willing a man should passe thorow their ground yet they will have leave asked, because by that meanes

1 In respect of himselfe.

Simile.

Simile.

To acknowledge his property in his gifts.

meanes the property is acknowledged, otherwise it would be taken as a common high way; so the *Lord* will have his servants come and aske, that they may acknowledge the property hee hath in those gifts hee bestowes upon them: Indeed otherwise wee would forget by what tenure wee hold those blessings wee enjoy, and what service we owe to the *Lord*; as you know there is an homage due to every Lord of a Mannor, that he might bee acknowledged of his Tenants; so the *Lord* will have this duty of prayer performed, that wee may acknowledge that wee hold all of him, and that wee might remember the service wee ought to doe him, to rise and goe at his command, that is, to doe his service, which we would be ready to forget, if we were not accustomed to the duty of calling on him.

Simile.

2 To honour him.

Likewise he will have it done for his honours sake, hee will have men call upon him, that they may learne to reverence him, and likewise that others might be stirred up to reverence him, and to honour him, and to feare him. The servants of a Prince doing honour and reverence to their Lord, stirre up those that are lookers on: and as the Schoolmen say of glory, Glory is properly this, not when a man hath an excellencie in him, (for that hee may have, and yet bee without glory) but glory is an ostentation, a shewing out of that excellencie. It is the phrase that is used in the Sacrament, You shall celebrate the Sacrament, that you may *shew forth the Lords death*; so the *Lord* will have us come and call upon

Simile.

Glory, what.

on his name to shew forth the duty of prayer, and that we may shew forth his glory. This is for the *Lord* himselfe.

Now *from our selves*, we are to doe it, partly that the graces of his Spirit may be increased in us: for prayer exerciseth our graces, every grace is exercised in prayer, and they being exercised are increased. See an excellent place for this in *Iude* 20. *That you may edifie your selves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost*; as if he should say, the way to edifie your selves, and build up your selves, is to pray in the *Holy Ghost*, that is, by spirituall prayer, made through the power, and assistance, and strength of the *Holy Ghost*: Every such prayer builds us up, it increaseth every grace in us; faith, repentance, love, obedience, and feare, all are increased by prayer.

a In respect of our selves.

1 That the graces in us may be increased. *Iude* 20.

Partly, because they being exercised and set on worke in prayer, are more ready and apt to the performance of this duty, than if they should be seldome inured thereto.

2 To exercise grace.

And partly also, because prayer brings us to Communion with *God*. For if the good company of the godly one with another will increase grace, how much more will communion with the *Lord* himselfe quicken and encrease it?

3 To bring us to communion with *God*.

Moreover, this duty is required, that wee may be acquainted with GOD, for there is a strangenesse betweene the *Lord* and us, when we doe not call upon his name. It is the command which you shall finde in *Iob* 22. *acquaint thy selfe with the Lord, that thou mayest have peace with him, and thou shalt*

4 To avoyd strangenesse with *God*.

Iob 22.21

Simile. How acquaintance is gotten and loſt.

ſhalt have proſperitie. Now, you know how acquaintance growes amongſt men; it is by converſing together, by ſpeaking one to another. On the other ſide, wee ſay; when that is broken off, when they ſalute not, or ſpeake one to another, a ſtrangeneſſe growes; ſo it is in this: when wee come to the *Lord*, and are frequent, and fervent in this duty of calling upon him, wee grow acquainted with him, but without it wee grow ſtrangers, and the *Lord* dwels a far off, neither are we able to behold him, except we be accuſtomed to it, for the more we come into his preſence, the more wee are acquainted with him. Therefore that is another reaſon why wee ſhould uſe this, that we may get acquaintance with the *Lord*.

5 To teach us thankfulneſſe.

Likewiſe, that we may learne to be thankefull to him, for thoſe mercies we have received from him; for if *God* ſhould beſtow mercies upon us unasked, we would forget them, his hand would not be acknowledged in them; and wee would not ſee his providence in diſpoſing thoſe bleſſings that wee doe enjoy; but when wee come to aske every thing before him, wee are then ready to ſee his hand more, and to prize it more, and we are diſpoſed to more thankefulneſſe. So that it is a ſure rule commonly, What wee winne with prayer, that wee weare with thankefulneſſe, and that which wee get without prayer, wee ſpend, and uſe without any lifting up of the heart to *God*, in praiſing him, and acknowledging his hand in beſtowing it upon us: ſo you ſee what this duty is. And,

Note. What we get without prayer, is ſpent unthankefully.

Secondly,

Secondly, why the *Lord* will have this duty performed.

Now thirdly, (in a word) what is it to *pray continually?* The word in the originall signifieth, such a performance of this duty, as that you doe not cease to doe it; at such times as GOD requires it at your hands. Compare this with that in the second Epistle to *Timothy* 1.3. The Apostle sayth there, that hee hath him in *continuall remembrance, praying for him night and day*, where the same word is used that is here. Now wee cannot thinke that the Apostle had *Timothy* in continuall remembrance, that hee was never out of his thought, but the meaning is, when hee did call upon GOD, from day to day, hee still remembred him. So to *pray continually* is to pray very much, to pray at those times when *God* requires us to pray. For it is the definition that Philosophers give of idlenesse, a man is then said to bee idle, when hee doth not that which hee ought, in the time when it is required of him. He is an idle man that workes not when hee ought to worke; so hee is sayd not to pray continually, that prayes not when hee ought to pray. In a like manner I conceive this to be the meaning of the Apostle, *Rejoyce evermore, Phil.* 4.4. so here when hee comes to this exhortation of prayer, hee contents not himselfe to say, pray very often, but *pray continually*, as wee use to expresse our selves when wee would have a thing frequently done, wee say, see that you bee alwayes doing of this. So the Apostles scope is to

1 What it is to pray continually. *Adiadeutos.*

2 *Tim.* 1.3.

Idlenes, what.

to shew that it should bee exceeding often, and that it should be very much done. Hence wee gather this by the way.

Obser. A constant course of prayer, at least twice a day is our duty.

That wee are bound to keepe our constant course of calling upon God, at the least twice a day, whatsoever wee doe more.

Quest. But you will say, what ground have you for that, why doe you instance in that twice a day?

Answ. The ground of it is this, in that the Apostle bids us *pray continually*, that is, doe it exceeding much, doe it very often, the least we can doe it, is twice a day, we may doe it oftener, but that, I say, is the least. When wee have such a command as this, when wee have such a precept as this, *Pray continually*, and this rule illustrated by such examples as we have in the Scripture, why is it recorded, if it be not true of every example in that kind that is sayd of the generall example, 1. *Cor.* 10. *They are written for our learning?*

1 From the Text.

2 From examples.

When it is sayd that *David* prayed oft, and *Daniel* expresly in *Dan.* 6. 3. *Hee prayed three times a day*, that was his constant course, I say, wee may thinke wee are bound to doe it at the least twice a day.

Dan. 6. 3.

Consider also a little the reason of it, why wee are bound to doe it; In the *Temple*, you know the *Lord* was worshipped twice a day, there was *the Morning and Evening Sacrifice.* What was the ground of that commandement? There was no reason of it, but that the LORD might bee worshipped, and that was the time that he would have it done, twice a day, morning and evening: but besides that, it was not onely

3 From reasons.

1 That God might be worshipped.

that

that the *Lord* might be worshipped, (wherein we should follow that example of worshipping him morning and evening.) But likewise our occasions are such, that, that is the least we can doe, to call upon him constantly morning and evening: for there is no day but wee use many blessings, and we take many of his creatures. Now we may not take any of them without his leave; so that thou art bound to aske for them before thou take them, and pray for a blessing upon them, or else thou hast no right to them, thou hast no lawfull use of them: that place is plaine, 1 *Tim.* 4. *Every Creature of God is good, and ought not to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by prayer.* So that, if you take common blessings every day, and doe not seeke them at the *Lords* hands before you take them, they are not sanctified unto you, you have not a lawfull use of them, you have no right unto them.

2 That we may use blessings aright. 1 Tim. 4. 4.

Besides, my beloved, it is that which the *Lord* commands in every thing, *Make your requests knowne in every thing*, that is, whensoever you need any thing, make your requests knowne; so *in every thing give thanks*. And therefore the least we can doe, when we have received, and doe need so many mercies, is to give thankes, and to seeke to him so often, from day to day.

3 From Gods command.

Moreover, doe not our hearts need it, are they not ready to goe out of order, are they not ready to contract hardnesse, are they not ready to goe from the *Lord*, and to bee hardened from *Gods* feare? Therefore this duty is needfull, in that re-

4 To keepe our hearts in order.

gard to dompose them, and bring them backe againe into order.

5 To get forgiveneſſe of of daily ſinnes.

Laſtly, doe not the ſinnes wee commit daily, put a neceſſity upon us of doing this, that they may bee forgiven, and done away, and that wee may bee reconciled to God againe? Therefore doe not think that it is an arbitrary thing to call upon *God*, twice a day, becauſe there is no particular expreſſe command; for if you conſider theſe places that I have named, and the reaſons, wee ſhall ſee there is a neceſſity lies upon us to doe it. So much ſhall ſerve for that, I come now to make ſome uſe of this that hath beene delivered.

Vſe 1. Shewing the miſery of wicked men, in that they cannot pray.

Firſt, in that ſuch prayers as the *Lord* accepts, are an expreſſion of holy deſires, ſuch deſires, I meane, as riſe from the regenerate part of a man: Hence then wee ſee that all naturall men are in a miſerable condition, when times of extremity come, when the day of death comes, when there is no other helpe in the world, but ſeeking to the *Lord*, when all the creatures forſake them, and are not able to help them, & there is no way to go to the *Lord* but by prayer; if prayer be an effect and fruit only of the regenerate part of a man, whereof a carnall man is not partaker, then he is in a miſerable condition. Therefore let ſuch men conſider this as put all off to times of extremity. Put the caſe, thou haſt warning enough, at ſuch a time, & haſt the uſe of thy underſtanding, yet thou art not able to doe any good without this regeneration; for, if there be not grace in the heart, thou art

Note.

not

not able to make a spirituall prayer to the *Lord* such as hee accepts. Therefore take heed of deferring and putting off, labour to bee regenerate, to have your hearts renewed, while you have time, and if thou be not able to call upon *God* in the time of health, how wilt thou doe it when thy wits, and thy spirits are spent and lost, in the times of sickenesse and extreamity? Therefore let that be considered, which wee doe but touch by the way briefly.

Vse 2.

Secondly, if the Lord command this, if it bee the command of *God*, *Pray continually*: Then take heed of neglecting this duty, rather bee exhorted to bee frequent, and fervent in it, *to continue therein, and watch therein with all perseverance.* It is a common fault amongst us, either wee are ready to omit it, or come to it unwillingly, or else wee performe it in a careleſſe and negligent manner, not considering what a command lyeth upon the sons of men to performe it constantly and conscionably. I beseech you therefore consider first, that it is a priviledge purchased by the blood of *Jesus Christ*: *Christ* died for this end, it cost him the shedding of his blood, *That wee through him, might have entrance to the Throne of grace*: and will you let such a priviledge as this lie still? If you doe, so far as is in you, you cause his blood to bee shed in vaine: for if you neglect the priviledges gotten by that blood, so far you neglect the blood that procured them; but to neglect this duty, is to neglect that. Besides, if we aske you the reason, why you abstaine from other sins, why you

Ephes. 6.

Motives to prayer.

1

Christ died for this end.

2

It is Gods command.

you steale not; why you commit not adulterie, and murther; The reason that you give, is, because the *Lord* hath commanded you. Hath not the *Lord* commanded you to pray constantly, at all times? If you make conscience of one commandement, why doe you not of another?

3 The example of Saints, Dan. 6. 10.

Consider *Daniel* in this case, in the 6. of *Daniel*, hee would not omit a constant course of prayer, hee did it three times a day, and that was his ordinary custome. If hee would not omit it to spare his life, if hee would not omit it in such a case of danger as that; why will you omit it for businesse, for a little advantage, for a little gaine, for a little wealth, or pelfe, or pompe, or pleasure, or whatsoever may draw you from that dutie?

4 The equity of it.

Doe but consider, what an unreasonable, and unequall thing it is: that when the *Lord* gives us meat and drinke, and clothes, from day to day, when hee gives us sleepe every night, when hee provides for us such comforts, as wee have neede of, so that the least creature doth not us any service, but as farre as hee sets it on worke to doe that service, for us to forget him, and not to give him thankes, and not to aske these things at his hands, not to seeke unto him, but to live as without GOD *in the world*, as many doe, who neglect this duty: I say, it is a profession of living without GOD in the world; wee are strangers to him, it is open rebellion against him. Therefore take heed of omitting it, take heed of neglecting it.

Besides,

Beſides all this, wee ſhould doe it for our owne ſakes, if wee conſider what uſe we have of this duty for our ſelves, Is it not the key that openeth all *Gods* treaſures? When Heaven was ſhut up, was not this the key that open'd it? when the wombes were ſhut up, was not this it that opened them? You know, *Eliah prayed for raine*; ſo wee may ſay for every other bleſſing. All GODS treaſures are locked up to thoſe that doe not call upon his name, this opens the doore to them all, whatſoever they be that we have occaſion to uſe, this is effectual. And this doth it better than any thing beſides; If a man be ſicke, I will be bold to ſay, a faithful praier is more able to heale his diſeaſe than the beſt medicine; *The praier of faith ſhal heale the ſicke, Iam.* 5. You know the woman that had the bloody iſſue, when ſhe had ſpent all upon Phyſicians, and could doe no good, then ſhee came to Chriſt, and offered a faithfull prayer to him, that did it, when ſo many yeeres Phyſicke could not doe it. *Beloved*, if there be a Prince, or a great man, whoſe minde wee would have turned towards us, a faithfull prayer will doe it ſooner than the beſt friends. So it was with *Nehemiah*, you know his requeſt, that the *Lord* would *give him favour in the ſight of the man*; if wee bee in any ſtrait, as it was in *Joſephs* caſe, if we have any difficult matter to bring to paſſe, this praier and ſeeking to the *Lord*, will expedite, and ſet us at liberty ſooner, it will finde a way to bring it about more than all the wits in the world, becauſe it ſets *God* on worke. You have no power to doe any thing.

5 The benefit of it.

Prayer the key to unlocke *Gods* treaſures.

Iames 5.

Nehem. 1. 11.

Prevalent prayer.

Certainely a praying Christian that is prevalent and potent with *God*, (that seekes to him) hee is able to do more than all the witches in the world, for they set the Divell a-worke, but prayer sets *God* a-worke, it sets him a-worke to doe us good, to heale us, and to deliver us out of extremities: and therefore, I say, for our owne sakes, even out of selfe-love, and for common comforts you have need to use this. Certainely, if these things were beleeved, (for you heare them onely, you give us the hearing for the time, but if they were beleeved,) many would be more frequent in this duty, they would not be so negligent in it, or come in so careleſſe a manner to it.

6 It is the best way to fill the heart with joy.

Furthermore, I beseech you to consider this, every man desires joy and comfort, and commonly one thing that keepes us off from this duty, is sports and pleasures, one thing or other, that we take delight in, which dampe and hinder us in these things, in spirituall performances: Praier is the best way of all other to fill thy heart with true joy, as we see in *Joh.* 16. 24. hee saith there, *In my Name yee have asked nothing hitherto, but now aske, that your joy may be full.* This is one motive that Christ useth to exhort us to bee frequent in this duty, that our joy may be full: which I take to be the meaning of that in *James* 5. *If any man be sad, let him pray*, not onely because prayer is sutable to such a disposition, but likewise it will cheere him up, it is the way to get comfort; *If any bee sad, let him pray.* So it is in *Phil.* 4. 6. *In all things make your requests knowne, and the peace of God shall keepe*

John 16. 24.

James 5. 13.

Phil. 4. 6.

keepe you in the communion of Ieſus Chriſt: That is it that brings peace, and quietneſſe; and therefore there is much reaſon why we ſhould be conſtant in this duty, it is that which quickens us, it is that which fills us with joy, and comfort, and with true peace, which every one deſires.

7 Our ſafety conſiſts in it.

Moreover, conſider it is thy buckler; prayer is the helmet that keeps thee ſafe; when a man neglects it, when he ceaſeth to goe to *God* by prayer, when he once ſhewes himſelfe to be a ſtranger to the *Lord* by neglecting this duty, then hee is out of the pales of his protectiō, like the conies that goe out of their burrowes; for ſo is the *Lord* to thoſe that pray: the *Lord* is a protection to thoſe that call upon his Name. The very calling upon his name is a running under GODS wings, as it were, that is, a putting our ſelves under his ſhadow; but when thou neglecteſt that, thou wandreſt abroad from him. Now doe wee not need protection from outward dangers, from day to day? doe we not need to be kept from the inward danger of ſinne and temptation? Surely praier is one part of the *ſpirituall Armour*, as we ſee *Eph. 6.* In the *compleat Armor of God, prayer* is reckoned up the laſt, as that which buckles up all the reſt, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Continue in prayer, and watch to it with perſeverance.* And you have the more reaſon to do it, becauſe it is not onely a part of this armour, but it enables you to uſe all the reſt, to uſe the Word, and to uſe Faith, for prayer ſtirs them up all. What is it to have Armor, and not to have it ready? now prayer makes it ready. Therfore you

Epheſ. 6.

Prayer teacheth to uſe the reſt of the ſpirituall armour.

see *Christ* prescribes the same rule in *Mat.* 26.41. *Pray, that you enter not into temptation:* as if that were the way to secure us, to shelter and to keepe us safe from falling into temptation. It is a thing I would advise you to, to pray, and to seeke to the *Lord* continually. Therefore, if wee should use onely this one reason to you, to bee constant in this dutie, because it is for your safety, it were sufficient. You know, when a man is *in a Citie whose walls are broken downe*, when hee lies exposed to temptation, he is in a dangerous case. So I may use this *Dilemma* to you, if you have a disposition, and you think thus, I hope I am well enough, I hope my heart is in a good temper enough, I am not now exposed to any temptation, I feare nothing; make this argument against thy selfe, Why doe I neglect so good a gale, if my heart be so well disposed to pray, why doe I then omit it? Againe, if there be any indisposition in me, why doe I hazard my selfe? what if Satan should set upon thee? what if the World should set upon thee? what if a sutable temptation agreeable to thy lusts be offred? art thou not in danger? and therefore a constant course should be kept in it, we should take heed of being negligent in it. And will a man now professe that he hopes hee is the servant of *God*, and in a good estate, although he do not pray so much as others, (we speak not of frequency simply, but of such a performance as is required) I say, to professe that thou art a servant of *Christ*, and that thou lovest him, and that hee is thy husband, and that thou

Mat. 26.41.

Note.

We cannot love Christ but we must call upon him.

art his ſervant, and yet calleſt not upon him from day to day, that is an idle thing, it is impoſſible; if thou diddeſt love him, thou wouldeſt expreſſe thy ſelfe in calling upon his name. Shall a friend that is an acquaintance onely to us, in whom wee delight, but come to us, and wee are willing to ſpend many houres with him; and ſhall we profeſſe our ſelves to bee friends of *God*, and him to bee our friend, and that wee delight in him, and yet neglect this dutie? This is a common thing amongſt you, when you ſee a man that meditates all his matters himſelfe, or if hee doe open his minde, and tell them to ſome body elſe, it muſt bee ſuch a one as profeſſeth to be a friend to him; now if this friend ſhould never heare from him, nor hee ſhould never ſpeake to him, or if hee doe, it is in ſuch a negligent manner, as it may appeare, hee doth not truſt him, hee doth not regard what hee can doe for him, and hee doth it ſo ſhortly, that hee can ſcarſely tell what the buſineſſe is, I ſay, in ſuch a caſe, would you not reckon his profeſſion of friendſhip to bee an idle and empty profeſſion? Now apply it to thy ſelfe, thoſe that ſay they have communion with *God*, and they hope their eſtate is good enough, they ſtand in good tearmes with him, but yet, if they be in any neceſſitie, for all the matters and occaſions that fall out from day to day, either they thinke of them in themſelves, or they are apt enough to declare them to man, or if they goe to God, they doe it negligently, they poaſt over the matter, ſo as they have

Similes.

If wee bee friends of *God* wee muſt acquaint him with our ſtate by prayer.

have scarce leasure to expresse themselves and their doings; doe you thinke hee will take such for friends? and doe you thinke, that this is true, sound, and hearty profession? Therefore (to end this) I beseech you consider it, and take heed of being remisse and negligent in it; for you see it is a command from the LORD,

Pray continually.

(***)

FINIS.

THE

THE SECOND SERMON.

1 Thess. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

NOT to repeat what hath beene delivered, but to presse this point on us a little further, (for, what is more necessary, than that wee should keepe a constant course in this dutie, since the very life of Religion consists in it?) I adde this to all I pressed in the morning, that if you doe neglect this dutie, it exposeth you to great disadvantage; both for the outward man, and for the inward man; and there are but these two that you need to care for.

8 The omission of it doth disadvantage men.

For

1 In the outward man.

For the outward man, it deprives you of the blessing: put the case you have never so good successe in your enterprizes, put the case you have outward comforts in abundance, yet still the blessing is wanting; and not onely so, but it uncovers the roofe, as it were, and the curse is rained downe upon your tables, upon your meat and drinke, upon all the endeavours, and all the enterprizes you take in hand. Wee consider not what we doe, when we neglect this duty, to what danger wee expose our selves unto from day to day; for it is one thing to have outward comforts, and another thing to have the blessing with them.

Simile.

2 In the inward man.

Againe, consider what losse you suffer in the inward man, when yee neglect this duty at any time; for that is ready to be distempered, and to goe out of order, it is ready to contract hardnesse, to contract soile; spirituall grace is ready to decay. It fals out with a mans heart, as it doth with a Garden that is neglected, it will quickly bee over-runne with weedes, if you looke not diligently to it, and the way to looke to it, is constancie in this dutie. That is a notable place *Iob* 15. 4. when *Eliphaz* observed some distemper in *Iobs* affections (as he apprehended it) he tels him that the speech hee used was not comely, but vaine, and sinfull: and what then? *Surely Iob* (saith hee) *thou restrainest prayer from the Lord.* As if he should say, It is impossible, *Iob*, that thou shouldest fall into these distempers, if thou diddest keepe thy course constantly in this duty; there-

Iob 15. 4.

fore

fore surely (saith he) thou restraineſt prayer from the *Lord*; So it is with us, let us restraine prayer from GOD, and distempers will arise quickly in our spirits, worldly-mindednesse will bee ready to grow upon us, wee shall bee apt to bee carnall, wee shall forget *God*, and forget our selves, and forget the good purposes, and desires wee had: and therefore that you may keepe your hearts in order, you must keepe a constant course in this dutie: which if you doe, though your peace be interrupted, this will repaire it againe, it will make up the breaches againe, though there bee some distempered affections that grow upon us, yet prayer will compose all. As sleepe composeth drunkennesse, so prayer will compose the affections: a man may pray himselfe sober againe, nothing doth it sooner, nothing doth it more effectually, and this you shall finde, that as you either omit it, or slight it over, so you shall finde a proportionable weakenesse growing upon the inward man, as the bodie feeles, when it neglecteth either sleepe or dyet, or exercise: therefore to end this exhortation, let us bee constant in it.

Inward distempers arise, if prayer be neglected.

Simile.

Onely remember this, (when wee exhort you thus to keepe a constant course, for which you heard so many reasons in the morning, I say, remember this caution) that if it be performed in a formall, or in a customarie and overly manner, you were as good to omit it altogether: for the *Lord* takes not our prayers by number, but by weight: when it is an outward picture, a dead carcasse

Wee were as good not pray at all, as doe it in a formall overly manner.

carcasse of prayer, when there is no life, no fervency in it, hee regards it not. Bee not deceived in this, it is a very usuall deceit; it may bee a mans conscience would bee upon him, if hee should omit it altogether; and therefore when hee doth something, his heart is satisfied, and so hee growes worse and worse: therefore consider, I say, that the very doing of this duty, is not that which the LORD heeds, but hee will have it so performed, that the end may bee obtained, and that the thing may be effected, for which you pray. If a man send his servant to goe to such a place, it is not his going to and fro that hee regards, but hee would have him to dispatch the businesse; so in all other workes, hee cares not for the formalitie of performance, but would have the thing so done, that it may bee of use to him: If you set a servant to make a fire for you, and he goe, and lay some greene wood together, and perhaps put a few coales under, this is not to make a fire for you, but he must either get dry wood, or hee must blow till it burne, and be fit for use: so when your hearts are unfit, when they are like greene wood, when you come to warme them, and to quicken them by prayer to *God*, it may bee you post over this dutie, and leave your hearts as cold, and as distempered as they were before: My *Beloved*, this is not to performe this dutie. This duty is effectually performed, when your hearts are wrought upon by it, and when they are brought to a better tune; and to a better temper than they were before. If you finde

When prayer is performed aright.

Simile.

Simile.

Prayer in a customary manner amends not the heart.

find sinfull lusts there, your businesse is to worke them out by prayer, to reason the matter, to expostulate the thing before the LORD, and not to give over, till you have set all the wheeles of your soule right, till you have made your hearts perfect with GOD; and if you finde your hearts too much cleaving to the world, you must weane them, and take them off; if you finde a deadnesse, unaptnes and indisposition in you, you must lift up your soules to the *Lord*, and not give over till you be quickned; and this is to performe the dutie in such a manner as the *Lord* accepts, otherwise it is an hypocriticall performance: for this is hypocrisie, when a man is not willing to let the duty goe altogether, nor yet is willing to performe it fervently, and in a quicke and zealous manner: for hee that omits it altogether is a profane person, and hee that performes it zealously, and to purpose, is an holy man; but an hypocrite goes betweene both, hee would doe something at it, but he will not doe it throughly. And therefore, if thou finde that thou hast slubbred over this dutie from day to day; that thou performest it in a negligent manner, and perfunctorilie, know that it is an hypocriticall performance; and therefore when we spend so much time in exhorting you to a constant course in this duty; still remember, that you must performe it in such a manner, that it may have heate and life in it, that it may bee acceptable to GOD, and doe good to your owne hearts, to bring them to a more holy frame of grace,

What we must doe in prayer.

Hypocrisie, what.

Note.

grace, and to a better temper, than (it may bee) you found them in, when you went about the duty.

Obiect. 1. This duty requireth much time.

And if you obiect now; I, but it will coſt us much time to doe this.

Anſw. Three-fold.

Anſw. 1. The time ſpent in prayer hindreth not.

Indeed this is one common cauſe, among all the reſt, that keepes us off from the thorow performance of this duty, but (to ſpeake to that in a word) remember this; that the time that is ſpent in calling upon GOD, hinders you not in your buſineſſe, though it ſeeme to hinder you, and though it takes ſo much from the heape, yet indeed it increaſeth the heape, as it is ſaid of tithes and offerings, *Bring them in*, and thinke not, that becauſe you leſſen the heape, that you are poorer men: no, ſaith the *Lord*, it will increaſe your ſtore, *I will open the windowes of Heaven*, and you ſhall have ſo much the more for it; ſo it is true in this caſe. In other things you ſee it well enough; You know, the baiting of the horſe hinders not the journey, and the oyling of the wheele, and the whetting of the ſcith, though there be a ſtop in the worke for a time, yet as our common ſaying is, *A whet is no let*, and the doing of this is no impediment.

Mal. 3. 10.

Simile.

Anſw. 2. It is greater than worldly buſineſſe, and therefore ſhould be preferred.

Secondly, put the caſe it were, yet is it not the greater buſineſſe? what is it that you get by all your labours, and travailes? if it bee riches, it comes not into any compariſon with grace and holineſſe, with that riches wherewith prayer makes you rich. But, ſay it bee ſomewhat more noble than that, as learning, or knowledge: yet what

what is that to the renewing of *Gods* Image in us? were it not better, to spend time to get grace to make us *rich to God*, to make us to get strength in the inward man, to passe thorow all varieties of afflictions, in getting that which is the chiefest excellency of all others? for is not that the best excellency? When *Adam* was in *Paradise*, the having of *Gods Image*, you know it excelled all other excellencies in the world; and so it doth still: now the more you pray, the more you get of this *Image*: for a man of much praier is alwaies a man of much grace, it much increaseth those spirituall gifts, which are better then all the outward thinges you can get by your imployment and diligence in them: therefore, I say, though it do spend you much time, yet know (as *Christ* said to *Mary*) hee that prayes much, though hee be a great loser in other things, yet he *chooseth the better part.*

What is mans best excellencie.

Prayer increaseth Gods Image.

Last of all, consider this, when thou comest to offer sacrifice to *God*, wouldest thou offer that which cost thee nothing? If thy continuing in prayer and spending much time in it, should cost thee some disadvantage in thy affaires, & should lose thee that which another gaines, so that thou getteest not so much knowledge, as another man doth, thou doest not so much in thy trade, in thy businesse, thou doest not set things in order, as thou mightest have done; yet know this, that it is great wisedome to make our service to God costly to us; you know *Davids* choise; *Shall I offer to the Lord that which cost mee nothing?* and therefore

Answ. 3. We must performe it though with disadvantage, that our sacrifice may cost somewhat.

hee would needes give the worth to *Araunah* the *Iebusite* for that which he bought; in like manner since it is to a good Master that sees what you doe, that knowes what it costeth, and what losse you are at, and withall that is willing and able to recompence it, why should you shorten this businesse, and post it over, because of other occasions, and other businesse that you have to doe?

Object. 2 In respect of unfitnesse.

Oh, but a man will say further, I am willing to doe it, but I am unfit for it, and it may be the longer I strive, the unfitter I grow.

Answ. 1. God accepts the will for the deed, when.

To this I answer, first, in generall; if thou doe it as well as thou canst, though thou doe it not so well as thou shouldest, in this case, *God accepts the will for the deede*, when a man puts his strength to it, when there is no indiligence in him, when there is no lazinesse, (for in that case he will not accept the will for the deed, but) when a man doth his utmost, as those that would have given more, and could not, their will was accepted for the deede, in 2. *Cor.* 8. 12. I say, when thou doest what thou canst, when thou spares no labour to get thy heart upon the wing, to raise and quicken it, and to inlarge it to this duty: then God accepts it.

2 *Cor.* 8. 12. 13.

Answ. 2. The best setting to it, is to fall upon performance.

But againe, I adde further, there is an unskilfulnesse in going about this duty: many times when we are not fit, we thinke to make our selves fitter, by spending time in thoughts, and meditations before; which I deny not but they may be profitable, but yet this I will propound to you, that

that the best way to fit our selves to this dutie, when we finde an indisposition unto it, as, not to stay till wee have prepared our selves by meditation, but to fall presently upon this duty; (I will give you the reason of it) because though a preparation is required for the performance of every spirituall dutie, yet, the remote preparation is that which is intended, and meant, when wee say we must prepare: for, if we speake of that which is immediate, the very doing of the duty is the best preparation to it. For example, if a man were to runne a race, if hee were to doe any bodily exercise, there must bee strength of body, hee must be fed well, that he may have ability; but the use of the very exercise it selfe, the very particular act, which is of the same kinde with the exercise, is the best thing to fit him for it: so in this dutie of prayer, it is true, to be strong in the *inward man*, to have much knowledge, to have much grace, makes a man able and fit for the dutie; but if you speake of the immediate preparation for it, I say, the best way to prepare us is the very duty it selfe, as all actions (of the same kind) increase the habits, so prayer makes us fit for prayer; and that is a rule, *The way to godlinesse is in the compasse of godlinesse it selfe*; that is, the way to grow in any grace is the exercise of that grace.

Simile.

Exercise of grace increaseth it.

Note.

It is a point that *Luther* pressed, and hee pressed it out of his owne experience, and this reason hee useth; In this case, saith he, when a man goes about to fit himselfe, by working on his owne thoughts, now he goes about to overcome

Note this expression of *Luther*.

his unfitnesse by his owne strength, and to contend with Satan alone; but when a man feeleth an indisposition, and goes to *God* by prayer, resting on GOD to fit him, hee takes *Gods* strength to oppose the indisposition, and deadnesse of his flesh, and the temptations of Satan, that hinder him, and resist him. Therefore you shall find this to bee the best way to fit your selves for prayer, namely to performe the duty. If you seeke to expedite, and devolve your selves out of your unfitnesse, by the working of your owne thoughts, commonly you involve your selves farther into those labyrinths, and are caught more and more. But this I speake by the way concerning matter of unfitnesse: The maine answer to this objection is, that which I gave you before, that if a man doe what he can, and do it faithfully, and in sincerity, that indisposition shall not hinder him: therfore still remember it must be done, it is not an excuse to us, at any time, nor ought to be, that we should omit the dutie wholly, under pretence of an unfitnesse.

By labouring against indisposition by our owne strength, we are more intangled.

Object. 3 A man is ready to say againe. But I find many difficulties, how shall I doe to remove them?

Answ. The best way hereunto I can take, is the very naming of the difficulties themselves to you, that you may know them, and make account of them; therefore consider this in generall, that it is not an easie thing to call upon GOD constantly: our misprision of the dutie, our reckoning of it, that it is a more facile and easie thing than it is, make us more to slight it, and causeth

Seven impediments in prayer, that makes it difficult.

us not to goe about it with that intenſion, which otherwiſe wee would, but conſider a little what it is. The dutie is very ſpirituall, and our *hearts* are *carnall*, and it is no eaſie thing to bring ſpirituall duties, and carnall hearts together.

1 Impediment: Our hearts are carnall.

Note.

Then againe, our natures are very *backward* to come into the *Lords preſence*, partly by reaſon of his great glory, by reaſon of his Majeſtie, who *dwells in light inacceſſible*; and our weake eyes are apt to be dazeled with it; and partly out of unaccuſtomednesſe, wee are not uſed to it, and therefore we are ready to fly from him, as beaſts that are wilde, and never were tamed to our hands, are ready to fly from us, ſo backeward is our nature to come into his preſence.

2 Our backwardneſſe to come into Gods preſence, and why.

Simile.

Againe, the variety of occaſions hinders us, every thing keepes us backe, for if a mans heart be cheerefull, it is apt to delight in other things; & if a mans heart be ſad (on the other ſide) if it bee a ſlight ſadneſſe, men are ready to drive it away with company, and with ſports, and with doing other things: But if the ſadneſſe be great, we are ſwallowed up with anguiſh of ſpirit, and then any thing is eaſier than to pray; as you may ſee by *Iudas*, it was eaſier for him to diſpatch himſelfe, than to goe and call upon *God*; ſo it is with men, when they have exceſſive griefe, when their anguiſh of heart is exceeding great: ſo that whether a man hath a cheerefull diſpoſition, or a ſad, whether the ſadneſſe bee great or ſmall, ſtill you ſhall finde a difficulty. If wee be idle, and have

3 Variety of occaſions hinder us.

Note.

nothing to doe, our hearts will bee poſſeſt with vaine thoughts, and if we be ful of buſineſſe, that diſtracts us alſo, and indiſpoſeth us on the other ſide: ſo ſtill there are impediments.

4 Worldly cares.

But there is one great impediment, among the reſt, and moſt common, which is *worldly cares*, and worldly-mindednesſe; worldly cares hinder ſpirituall prayer, and ſpirituall conference, and the holy performance (almoſt) of every duty; and therefore if you finde a difficulty in it, looke narrowly if that be not the cauſe.

5 Want of faith in Gods power and providence.

Againe, another great cauſe of this difficulty in prayer, of ſuch backwardneſſe to it, of ſuch indiſpoſition to it, is, becauſe wee doe not well conſider the nature of *God*, wee want *faith in his power*, and in his providence; wee doe not conſider GODS diſpoſing hand, which hath the guidance in every thing that belongs to us, in health, in ſickeneſſe, in poverty, in riches, in good ſucceſſe, and ill ſucceſſe: for if wee did ſee the providence of *God*, and acknowledge it more, wee ſhould be ready to call upon him; but this want of faith in his providence, that the *Lord* is not ſeene in his greatneſſe, and in his mighty power, this cauſeth men to bee backeward to ſeeke to him, but very forward to ſeeke to the creatures. When wee have any thing to doe, of any conſequence, wee are ready to poſt from this man to that man, and from this meanes to that meanes, but very backeward and negligent to go to *God* in prayer, to have the thing brought to paſſe that wee deſire, and this ariſeth from want of faith,

When wee are ſo backward to pray to God.

and

and from ignorance of GOD, and our not right consideration of him.

Besides, *Satan* hinders us exceedingly in this duty; for he knowes of what moment it is, and of what consequence, and therefore hee doth as the *Aramites* did, hee *fights not against small nor great, but against the King*; he knowes it is this duty which quickens every grace, it is the greatest enemy which he hath, and if he can keepe us from prayer, hee hath the upper hand of us, hee hath wrested the weapon out of our hands, hee hath disarmed us, as it were, and then he may doe what he will with us.

6 Satan hindereth. 1 *Kings* 22. 31.

Lastly, the *sinnes* we commit, especially grosse sinnes, they are a great hindrance to this dutie, and keepe from the spirituall and cheerefull performance of it: for sinne wounds the conscience, it disjoynteth and dismembers the soule, and a disjoynted member, you know, is unfit to doe any businesse; yea, when the sinne is healed and forgiven, yet there is a soreness left in the heart, though some assurance of pardon should follow upon the commission of a great sinne, so that this is another impediment. But I must not stand to reckon up any more, for wee shall finde enow by continuall experience.

7 The commission of great sinnes. *Simile.*

The use wee must make of it is, that if the impediments bee so many, and the difficulties that keepe us from a constant course in prayer, and from the performance of it to purpose, so great, then we must put on a resolution to breake through all; and lay it, as an inviolable law upon

Vse What course is to be taken against these impediments.

our ſelves, that wee will not alter. Let us thinke with our ſelves that the thing is difficult, and will coſt all the care, and all the intenſion that may be; yea, when thou haſt overcome the difficulties at one time, it may be, the next day, thou ſhalt meet with new conflicts, new diſtempers, new affections, new ſtrength of luſts, and a new indiſpoſition of mind will be on thee, and therefore hee that will be conſtant in this duty, muſt put on a ſtrong reſolution; as it was the ſaying of a holy man, (one of the holieſt men that theſe later times had) that hee never went to pray to *God*, but he found ſo many impediments, that except he bound himſelfe by an inalterable reſolution, which he reſolved not to break upon any occaſion, he could never have kept a conſtant courſe in it, or, if he had, hee ſhould never have kept himſelfe from a formall, cuſtomary performance of it. But I will adde no more, to preſſe this upon you, there hath been enough ſaid, I beſeech you conſider it.

A new indiſpoſition will be on us daily to prayer.

Note this well.

I come now to that I promiſed in the morning to doe, which is, that which doth exceedingly ſtrengthen us to the performance of this duty of calling upon God, of *praying continually*, (which we are here commanded to doe) *viz.* is to remove certaine objections, which are in the mindes of men, that ſecretly weaken the eſtimation of this truth, and inſenſibly, take us off, when wee marke them not: for, Beloved, when wee are ſo negligent in it, ſurely there is ſomething that is the cauſe of it, and if wee could finde the cauſe,

Removing the objections that are againſt prayer, doth ſtrengthen us to the duty.

cauſe, and remove it, wee could not ſpend an houre better.

The objections, that are commonly in the hearts of men, are many, I will name to you but theſe foure briefly. 4 Objections againſt prayer

First, a man is ready to ſay, what need I ſpend ſo much time, and be ſo large in the expreſſion of my wants to *God*, when hee knowes them? I cannot make them better knowne to him, he knowes them well enough already, and therefore what needeth it? *Obiect. 1.*

To this I anſwere (in a word, becauſe it is an objection that hath not much weight in it) that it is true, the *Lord* knowes thy wants, but withall, hee will have thee to know them; becauſe otherwiſe thou wilt not ſeek to him for them, thou wilt not ſet a price upon the things that hee beſtowes on thee, thou wilt not be thankfull to him when hee hath granted them; and therefore you ſhall finde our Saviour Chriſt uſeth this very argument, as a meanes to quicken us to prayer, ſaying, *Your heavenly Father knowes what you have need of*; what then? Shall we not therefore pray? Yes, ſaith hee, therefore pray yee the more earneſtly, and the more importunately to him: for ſince he knowes your wants, hee will bee more ready to heare your requeſts. *Anſw.* Why God will have us to pray though hee know our wants. *Math. 6.*

I but it will be ſaid againe, that he doth not only know them, but he alſo meanes, and purpoſeth to beſtow them: for he hath made a promiſe to us, and his promiſe is firme and ſure, and GOD is juſt, and muſt keepe his promiſe, and when hee hath *Obiect. 2.*

hath fully purpoſed it, what needs ſo much praying to bring it to paſſe?

Anſw. 1. Though God purpoſe to give bleſſings, it is upon condition that we pray.

I anſwer, the promiſes of *God* are to be underſtood with this ſecret condition annexed, I will doe ſuch and ſuch a thing for you, if you pray; though the condition be not alwayes expreſſed: and therefore wee ſee when *God* promiſed things in particular, yet ſtill they prayed, and prayed earneſtly. When he promiſed *Eliah* that it ſhould raine, yet, wee ſee, hee prayed, and contended much in his prayer; ſo when hee made a promiſe to *David*, that he would *make him an houſe*, yet, you know, *David* went to the houſe of the *Lord*, & ſate before him, and made earneſt prayer, as you may ſee in the ſecond book of *Samuel*: ſo *Daniel* had a particular promiſe, yet he prayed, & prayed long. The example of our Saviour *Chriſt* is without exception, who had all the promiſes ſure to him, yet, you ſee, *he prayed*, yea, *he ſpent whole nights in prayer*; and therfore you muſt underſtand it, that though you have a promiſe made, though the thing bee never ſo ſure to you, yet it is to bee underſtood with this condition, if you call upon *God*.

1 *Kings* 18. 41, 42.

2 *Sam.* 7. 11. 2 *Sam.* 7. 18. *Dan.* 9.

Anſw. 2. Hee will have us to doe it to worſhip him.

Now why the *Lord* will have you doe it, I ſhewed you many reaſons in the morning, to which we will adde this one: What if the *Lord* will have thee call upon him, though he purpoſe to do the thing, even for this end, that thou maiſt worſhip him? For, what elſe is it to worſhip the *Lord*? you ſhall finde this uſuall in the Old Teſtament, *The people bowed themſelves and worſhipped*, or *they fell upon their faces and worſhipped*. The meaning

To worſhip God, what.

is

is this, to worship *God* is nothing else, but to acknowledge the worthinesse that is in him. As when you doe worship to a man, you doe use so much outward demeanor and observance to him, as may acknowledge a worth in him above another man: and as outward gesture, is the outward worshipping of *God*, so the inward worship is inwardly to acknowledge his attributes. Now you shall see, prayer gives an acknowledgement of his Attributes most of any thing: for hee that prayes to *God*, he doth, in so doing, acknowledge his *omnipresence*, and his *omniscience*; that he heares that which the Idols of the *Gentiles* could not doe; that hee knowes the secrets of mens hearts, that neither men nor Angels can doe.

Prayer acknowledgeth all Gods Attributes.

Omniscience.

Againe, it acknowledgeth his Almighty *Power*, that hee is able to doe any thing; for that is presupposed, when we come and seeke to him.

Power.

Thirdly, it acknowledgeth his *Mercy* and his goodnesse; that he is not onely able, but exceeding willing to helpe.

Mercy.

Lastly, it acknowledgeth his *Truth*, that as he hath promised, so, I make account hee will performe it, when I goe and seeke to him; in a word, all the Attributes of *God* are acknowledged in prayer. Therefore, therein you worship him in a speciall manner, when you goe and seeke to him; & pray to him; for in so doing you acknowledge him; yea, you acknowledge him to be a *Lord* and a Father; as when we see a child runne to a man, and aske him blessing, when we see him aske him food:

Truth.

Simile.

food, and rayment, wee ſay, ſurely ſuch a man is his Father; ſo this very praying to God, is a worſhipping of him, becauſe it acknowledgeth his Attributes, and his relation to us, and ours to him.

Obiect. 3. But againe, thirdly, it will bee objected, I but alas, what can the endeavours or the prayers of a weake man doe? can they change the purpoſe of Almighty *God*, if hee doe not intend to doe this thing for mee, ſhall I hope to alter him?

Anſw. God is not changed by our prayers, but our ſelves. *Simile.* For anſwere hereto, I ſay this, in briefe, that when you doe call upon *God*, hee is not changed by your prayers, but the change is wrought in you, as wee have ſayd to you, heretofore, when a Phyſician is ſought unto by his Patient, the Patient deſires him earneſtly to give him ſuch a cordiall, and ſuch a reſtorative Phyſicke, that is pleaſing to him, the Phyſician denies him long, yet in the end, hee yeelds unto it, Why? not becauſe there is any change in the Phyſician, but becauſe there is a change in the Patient, hee is now fitted for this, before hee was not: ſo then the Phyſician yeelds now, whereas before he refuſed; and yet the change is in the Patient, and not in the Phyſician: in like manner beloved, when you goe about to ſtrive with *God* in prayer, when you contend, and wraſtle with him, (for ſo, we ought to doe) when you uſe many reaſons to perſwade him, you alter not him, but your ſelves: for thoſe arguments that you uſe, are not ſo much to perſwade him to helpe you,

you, as to perſwade your owne hearts to more faith, to more love, to more obedience, to more humilitie and thankefulneſſe; and that indeed is the reaſon, why prayer prevailes with *God*, not that the very ſending it up is that that prevailes with him, but becauſe a faithfull and ſpirituall prayer puts the heart in a better diſpoſition, ſo that a man is now made readie to receive a bleſſing at GODS hands, that before hee was not: And therefore, when you thinke you draw *God* to you, with your arguments, in truth, you draw your ſelves neerer to him; as when a man in a ſhip pluckes a rocke, it ſeemeth as if he plucked the rocke neerer to the ſhip, when as indeed the ſhip is plucked neerer to the rocke: ſo, I ſay, we draw our ſelves neerer to the *Lord*; now when wee draw neerer to the LORD, in prayer, and there is a ſpirituall diſpoſition wrought in our hearts, by the exerciſe of this dutie, then indeede the *Lord* drawes neere to us, to ſend us helpe, and to grant our requeſts, that wee put up to him; and therefore I ſay (which you ſhould marke by the way) that every prayer, as it hath a higher pitch of holineſſe in affection, and as it hath ſtronger arguments in it, ſo it is a better prayer, not becauſe this prayer ſhall prevaile with GOD more, or, that the excellencie of this prayer ſhould move him, but becauſe this pitch of holy affection, and ſtrength of argument workes upon your hearts: for the ſtrength of arguments moves your underſtanding, and the holineſſe of affection puts your will in a frame,

Arguments in prayer are not to perſwade God but our ſelves.

Simile.

What prayers are the beſt.

frame, and so disposeth your hearts, and fits you, as the Patient, we spake of before, is fitted when the Physician is willing to give the thing he desired.

Object. 4. Two-fold.

But the last objection, which indeed is more than all the rest, is this;

1

A man is ready to pray, wee see there are many men that doe not call upon *God*, and yet enjoy many mercies: it may bee, a man can say with himselfe, when hee did not use to pray, hee had health, and sleepe, and protection.

2

Againe, on the other side, he hath prayed for such and such things, and yet they have not beene granted. So this objection hath two parts, that a man hath obtained blessings, without prayer, and againe hee hath prayed, and yet he hath not obtained the blessings he sought for, at the *Lords* hands.

Answ.

For answer to the first, that men doe obtaine many blessings that doe not pray, (as how many young men are there, and old men too, that have health, and wealth, and peace, and liberty, and abundance of all things, and yet either they seek not to *God*, or if they doe, yet not in a holy and spirituall manner) and therefore this objection had need to bee answered; which I will doe with as much brevitie as I can.

1 Answer to the first part of the objection.

Answ. 1.

First, though they have these blessings, yet they have them uncertainly, they have no promise of them, they cannot build upon them; whereas they are sure mercies to the righteous man, hee can build upon these blessings: for he hath

hath a father to goe to, whose love hee knowes, and hee hath sure promises to build on; the other, though hee hath them, yet hee is in a slippery place, when he enjoyes them; it is an accidentall thing, he hath them from the hand of an enemy, and he knowes not how long he shall enjoy them.

Men that have blessings without prayer, have them uncertainely.

But I answere againe, (which is the chiefe answer to this objection) that there is a great deale of difference betweene having blessings through the *providence of God*, and betweene having them from the *mercy* of God, and by vertue of his promise, and out of his love to us in *Christ Iesus*. A naturall man may have many blessings of God; (so *God* said that hee made *Ieroboam* a King, hee gave him a Kingdome,) and many such passages we shall finde, when men come unjustly to them, as hee did to the Kingdome, yet *God* saith, he did it, that is, it was by his providence) and yet hee hath them not in mercy: for if thou hast these blessings, health, and sleepe, and successe in thy enterprizes, from day to day, and yet thy heart tels thee within, that thou hast not sought them at the *Lords* hands, as thou oughtest, I say to such a man, (and marke it) it were better for him that hee should want them: for certainely, when hee hath them, in this manner, hee hath them without a blessing; yea, hee hath them with a curse, and so had better to be without them, as it had bin better for *Achab* to have been without his vineyard, and as it had beene better for *Gehezi*, to have gone without his reward, that hee had of *Naaman*.

Answ. 2. Difference betweene having of blessings through the providence of God, and from the love of God.

To have outward things without prayer we were better want them.

man, the *Assyrian*, for you know hee had the leprosie with it: it had beene better for the children of *Israel* to have gone without their quailes; for you know the curse that followed, death went along with them; so when a man shall have peace and prosperity, and abundance of all things without seeking them at the *Lords* hands, from day to day, I say, hee had much better want them: for there goes death together with them. It is sayd plainely, that *ease slayeth the foolish*, (that is to say) this very prosperity, this thriving (notwithstanding a neglecting of prayer, and of holy duties) I say, it carries death along with it, as the obtaining of the Vineyard, brought death to *Achab*, the getting of the Kingdome was the destruction of *Ieroboam*, and therefore men have little cause to comfort themselves with this, that they enjoy many blessings, and never pray for them.

Answ. 3. Many things bestowed on wicked men for the Churches good.

But to answere this point more fully, I say, many blessings are bestowed upon men, not for their owne sakes, but for the Churches sake. A man may have strength of bodie, hee may have great gifts of mind, he may have great successe in using those gifts, he may bring great enterprizes to passe, so that you may truly say, the hand of *God* is with him, all this may bee done, not for his owne sake, but for the sake of the Church, and glory of *God* some other way, that hee might doe some service; to this purpose you see, it is plainely sayd of *Cyrus*, (*Isaiah* 45.4.) sayth the *Lord* there, *For Iacob my servants sake, and for Israel*

Isay 45.4.

rael mine elects ſake I have called thee by name, and have given thee this great power, and all this great ſucceſſe, although thou thy ſelfe have not knowne mee. (Marke) *Cyrus* was a moſt proſperous man, *Gods* hand was mighty with him, and yet all this was not for his owne ſake, but for the Churches ſake: ſo you may think it is when men proſper, many times, it is not for their owne ſakes, but to fulfill ſome other end of GOD'S providence: and therefore, marke this, and keep it for a rule; If thou proſpereſt in thy enterprizes, if thou enjoyeſt wealth, and peace, and abundance of all things, and art conſcious that thou doeſt not ſeeke to GOD, from day to day, that thou keepeſt not thy heart right and ſtraight, and perfect before him, neither doeſt call upon him, in an holy and ſpirituall manner, (certainely it is for one of thoſe cauſes) thou haſt it without a bleſſing, and with a curſe, thou haſt it for other ends, and not for good to thy ſelfe; and therfore thou haſt it very uncertainely, it may bee tooke from thee, thou knoweſt not how ſoone: yea, and this thou ſhalt bee ſure of, that it ſhall bee taken from thee then, when of all other times it will bee unfitteſt for thee: as a Theefe comes at a time when men leaſt looke for him, ſo *deſtruction comes ſuddenly* upon theſe men: *God* cuts them, as a man when hee would have Trees to dye, hee loppes them in that ſeaſon, that of all others is the unfitteſt, when the ſap is in the Tree, and the lopping wil cauſe them to wither; ſo the *Lord* will ſtrike them in a ſeaſon, that ſhall bee moſt

Note.

Simile.

Simile.

unfit, moſt unlookt for. It is quite contrary with the Saints, he cuts them in due ſeaſon, hee lops them in due time, when it is beſt for them, that they may grow the better for it.

Anſwer to the ſecond part of the objection.

But now for the other part of the objection, it may be, many among you are now ready to ſay, I have prayed for ſuch and ſuch things, and I have been earneſt, and yet the *Lord* hath denyed me. My Beloved, if we can ſatisfie this objection, wee ſhall then take this impediment away, that wee propound in this objection, which, as I ſaid, hath thoſe two parts. Therefore to this I anſwer:

Anſw. Our prayers are oft times amiſſe in one of theſe three reſpects.

First, if thou haſt not been heard in thy prayer, conſider, whether thou haſt not *prayed amiſſe*; it is a common fault among us, when wee have ſpent much time in prayer, and it may bee, wee have ſpent time in faſting and prayer, and the thing is not granted, wee preſently lay it upon the *Lord*, that hee hath not heard, when many times the cauſe is in our not praying as wee ought: It may bee thou haſt beene very earneſt, and therefore thou hopeſt thou haſt done very well; I tell thee, thou maiſt be very earneſt, and importunate with the *Lord*, when it may bee no more but a naturall deſire, as when a man hath need to be directed in a difficult caſe, that much concernes him; when hee hath neede to bee extricated, and taken out of ſuch a difficulty, and ſtrait, wherein he is involved; when he hath need of ſucceſſe in ſuch an enterpriſe, or any thing of that nature; I ſay, a man may be earneſt with the

First, in reſpect of the principle whence they flow, when they are but naturall deſires.

Lord.

Lord in ſuch a caſe, and yet his prayer may bee amiſſe, it may not bee a ſpirituall prayer, it may not bee an expreſſion of holy deſires to the *Lord*; for they onely prevaile with him: and yet I ſay not the naturall are excluded, (that is not my meaning) for they may adde winde to the ſailes, though holineſſe may guide the rudder, and keep the courſe, and make the ſterage, yet naturall deſires may make us more importunate, and may adde much to it: therefore, I ſay, conſider thy prayer.

Naturall deſires not excluded in true prayer.

Simile.

Secondly, Conſider againe, when thou haſt ſought ſo earneſtly to *God*, whether it be not to *beſtow it upon thy luſts*, as the Apoſtle ſpeakes, *Iam.* 4. 3. when thou haſt a buſineſſe to be performed, it may bee thou art earneſt with *God*, but haſt thou not an eye to thy owne glory, to thine owne praiſe and credit in it? when thou waſt earneſt for health, was it not that thou mighteſt live more deliciouſly? when thou deſireſt wealth, and ſucceſſe in thine enterprizes, that tend to mend thy ſtate, is it not out of ſome ambition? you know, that deſire is condemned, *If any man will bee rich*; is it not a deſire of greatneſſe? would you not be ſome body in your place, and ſet up your houſe and familie? Such things indeede GOD beſtowes upon men, but to have our deſires pitched upon them, and to pray for them in that ſenſe, is amiſſe; and my rule for it is in the firſt to *Timothy* the ſixth chapter the ninth verſe, *If a man will bee rich, &c.* that is, when a man deſireth exceſſively more than food and rayment

Secondly, In reſpect of the end, when they are for the ſatisfaction of our luſts. *Iam.* 4. 3.

1 *Tim* 6. 9.

When the naturall affection degenerates into a luſt.

convenient for him, then certainely the naturall affection is degenerate into a luſt; for when any affection exceeds, it ceaſeth to bee an affection, and begins to be a luſt: and therefore where it is ſaid, *If any man will bee rich, &c.* it is ſaid after, it is a *luſt*.

Queſt. But you will ſay, how ſhall a man know, when his prayer is to beſtow that which he prayeth for upon his luſts?

Anſw. How to know when we pray to beſtow things on our luſts.

I anſwer, If a man conſult with his owne heart, and deale impartially with himſelfe, hee may know what his ends are; but if you cannot finde it out that way, you may know it by the effect, you may know it by the bils you bring in. What is the expence of the things *God* hath beſtowed on you, when hee hath put a *price into your hands*, conſider how you beſtow it. If a Steward have a great ſumme of money that his Maſter hath truſted him with, and his bills bee, that hee hath beſtowed ſo much in riot, ſo much in fine apparell, &c. but there hath beene but ſo much beſtowed for his Maſters advantage, it is an argument he hath ſpent it ill: ſo when wee ſee there hath beene ſo much health ſpent, ſo much time, and ſo much ſtrength, in following our owne plots, and our owne worldly buſineſſe, without reſpect to *God*, not ſerving *God*, nor men in our calling, as wee ſhould doe; and that there hath beene little time beſtowed in prayer, in reading, in making our hearts perfect with *God*, in taking paines with them from day to day; I ſay, if wee thus looke upon the bill of expence,

Similc.

pence, and conſider how wee have beſtowed our time, our health, our ſtrength, our wits, from day to day, and our diſcourſe (for that is one price that we have in our hands, by which we may doe good, it is as a Bucket by which wee may draw from others; and likewiſe it is as a ſpring, and fountaine, wherewith wee may feed others, with the waters of life;) conſider how we have laid out all theſe things, and by that wee may know, how we are diſpoſed to uſe the bleſſings wee ſeeke for at GODS hands, whether wee ſeeke them to beſtow them upon our luſts, or to ſpend thoſe gifts to our Maſters advantage; and, if wee finde wee doe it for our own luſts; in this caſe I ſay to you, goe and amend your prayers, and GOD will amend your ſpeeding. Wee muſt doe in this caſe, as an Angler doth when hee hath throwne the bait into the River, if it ſtay long, and catch nothing, hee takes up the bait, and amends it, and when hee ſees it well, hee then continues, and waits: in like manner muſt every one of us doe; if thou pray, and pray long, and haſt not obtained the thing thou prayeſt for, look diligently to thy prayers, ſee whether they be right or no; if they be not, amend thy prayers, and *God* will amend his readineſſe to heare thee; if thou finde they be ſincere and hearty, mingled with holy deſires, and not with carnall and corrupt affections, then let the bait lye ſtill, that is, continue to pray, and to wait, and the LORD will come in due time.

Simile.

Simile.

But this is not all, though it be one maine thing

2 In respect of the manner, when they are uttered carelessly.

for besides this, when thou art not heard, consider, if thou hast not prayed remissely, it is a common fault amongst us, when wee succeed not in our praiers, we attribute it to many other things, but not to our remisnesse and carelesnesse in seeking to God; if a man want sleepe, if hee finde sicknesse and weaknesse, and distemper of body, he thinkes that he hath eaten amisse, and considers not whether he hath prayed amisse; if a man have miscarried in his businesse, hee begins to thinke, whether he hath not beene improvident, whether hee hath not dealt foolishly, whether he hath not omitted such and such meanes, as hee might have used, hee never thinkes whether hee hath prayed amisse or no; when that (perhaps) is the cause of our miscarrying, and not the thing which we commonly attribute it to: for though God be not the immediate cause, you know hee is the great cause; *There is no ill, that hee hath not done*: that which moves him, is alway either grace or sinne; as that which moves him to do us good, is our obedience to him; and that which moves him to the contrary, is neglect on our part.

What moves God to doe us good and evil.

But to answer further; suppose thy prayers be right, yet this is to be considered, that oftentimes a man is deceived, in thinking his prayers are not heard; and therefore you must rectifie that misconceit. As for example; sometimes, when wee would have the thing in one fashion, God bestowes the same thing upon us in another; and therefore thou mayest bee deceived in that: it may bee, a man prayes earnestly, that hee

Answ. 2. God grants our prayers oft times, yet,

First, not in that manner, as we desire.

hee may have a ſtrong body, to doe God ſervice withall, when as, perhaps ſickeneſſe of body makes him doe him better ſervice, becauſe it keepes him in more awe, it weanes him more from the world, and makes him more heavenly-minded. You know the caſe of *Paul*, hee would faine have had that luſt taken away that is ſpoken of, 2. *Cor.* 12. 9. and why? ſurely the thing hee would have had, was, to have his heart in an holy and right frame of grace; now, though *Paul* had not his petition granted that way he looked for, yet hee had it another way, the *Lord* increaſed in him the grace of humility by it, hee ſaw his owne weakeneſſe, and the power of Chriſt the more; and when this was diſcovered unto him, he was content. 2 *Cor.* 12. 9.

Is it not all one, whether the *Lord* keepes an enemy from doing us hurt, or that hee gives us a ſtrong helmet or buckler to keepe off the blow from wounding us? it may be a man prayes for money, and for eſtate; if *God* provide him meate and drinke, and cloathes ſufficiently, in ſtead of this, is it not all one? It may bee another would have a greater degree of conveniencie for his dwelling houſe, and many other things, if God give him a body able to endure that which is more courſe, all is one, as if hee were provided for more delicately. It is all one, whether a Phyſician quench the thirſt of his Patient, by giving him Beere and Drinke that is comfortable unto him, or by giving him Barberries, or ſomewhat elſe, that will doe the thing as well: and it is e- *Simile.*

quall to the childe whether the Nurſe feedes it with milke and other nouriſhment prepared for it, or gives it the breſt which it moſt deſireth: Even ſo it is all one to thee, whether the *Lord* anſweres thy petition, and gives thee the thing in the very ſelfe-ſame manner that thou wouldeſt have it; or beſtowes it in another manner every whit as well, if not better for thee.

2 Not by thoſe meanes, which we propound.

Secondly, as wee are deceived in the manner, ſo wee are deceived in the meanes oft times, in ſeeking to *God*. When a man prayes, he pitcheth upon ſuch a particular meanes, and thinkes verily that this is the way, or none; yet it may be the *Lord* will find out another way, that thou diddeſt never dreame of. *Inſtances.* *Paul* prayed to have a proſperous journey to *Rome*, hee little thought, that when he was bound at *Ieruſalem*, and poſted up and downe from one priſon to another, God was now ſending him to *Rome*; yet hee ſent him, and ſent him very ſafe with a great company attending upon him, he ſent him it may be in a better manner than hee himſelfe would have gone; and yet it was by ſuch a meanes as he could never dreame of. Alſo you know *Naaman* the *Aſſyrian*, hee had pitched upon a particular meanes, he thought the Prophet would have ſurely *come forth, and have laid his hands upon him*; but to goe and waſh in *Iordan*, he thought his labour all loſt, and his requeſt which hee made to the Prophet to no purpoſe; for it was a thing that hee never thought of, it was a weake and poore meanes that hee made no account of, yet that was the

meanes

meanes that *God* intended: ſo I ſay, wee oft deceive our ſelves, wee pitch upon ſuch particular wayes, and when theſe faile us, ſeeing that wee have prayed that theſe meanes might bee uſed, and GOD doth not uſe them, wee thinke preſently it cannot be effected. *Ioſeph* thought verily *Pharaohs ſteward* ſhould have beene the meanes to bring the promiſe to paſſe, & after that, *Pharaohs Butler* he uſed as a meanes, when hee deſired him to remember him; and yet all this was not the meanes, but another, which hee never thought of, which was a dreame of *Pharaohs*: the like was in the caſe of *Mordecai*, deliverance came a ſtrange way, a way that *Mordecai* never imagined. So *Abraham* thought verily that *Iſmael* had beene the ſonne of the promiſe, but *God* tells him hee was deceived, *Iſaac* was the ſonne, in whom hee would make good the promiſe. So the *Iſraelites* thought that *Moſes* ſhould have delivered them, that it ſhould have beene preſently true, that the yoke of bondage ſhould have immediately been taken off from them; but wee ſee GOD went another way to worke, hee ſent *Moſes* away into a farre Countrie, and the bondage was exceedingly increaſed upon them; ſo that they thought they were further off now than ever they were before, but in truth, they were neerer: for the increaſe of the bondage, increaſed *Pharaohs* ſinne, and made him ripe for deſtruction: Againe, it increaſed the peoples humility, it made them to pray harder, and to cry more fervently to GOD for deliverance, and ſo it made them more fit for it;

and

and *Moſes* at the laſt was more fitted to bee a deliverer after hee was ſo long trained up, and was ſo much humbled; ſo that when God ſeemes to us to goe a cleane contrary way, yet it is his next way to bring it to paſſe. *Beloved*, it is a common thing with us, wee pitch upon a certaine particular meanes, wee thinke ſuch a man muſt doe it, or ſuch a courſe muſt doe it, when the *Lord* intends nothing leſſe. And the reaſon often is, becauſe if wee ſhould have deliverance many times by ſuch meanes, by ſuch men, and by ſuch wayes, wee would attribute too much to the meanes. Therefore wee ſee, while *Gideon* had a great Army, the *Lord* would not doe it, it was too great for him; and therefore wee ſee to what a ſmall number hee brought it: ſo oft-times men thinke, oh if I had ſuch a mans helpe, or if I had ſuch a meanes, it would doe the thing, the enterpriſe would be brought to paſſe: when wee make too much account of it, the *Lord* (it may bee) caſts away that, which ſeemed moſt probable, and (even as he doth moſt of his workes, as hee builds his owne Kingdome by the moſt fooliſh and improbable meanes of all other, ſo) often hee doth our buſineſſe by ſuch meanes, that wee leaſt dreame of: therefore bee not diſcouraged. Suppoſe we pray that ſuch a great Prince ſhould raiſe the Churches, that ſuch a warre, that ſuch an enterpriſe, and project may doe it; put the caſe the *Lord* will not doe it ſo, are wee then preſently undone? and is there no helpe, becauſe ſuch a battaile

Wee attribute too much to meanes.

battaile is overthrowne, becauſe ſuch a King did not ſucceed, becauſe ſuch a Generall had not ſucceſſe according to our expectation? It may be that is not the way, the *Lord* will helpe the Church after another manner, than wee dreame of; and ſo for a mans ſelfe, hee hath a great buſineſſe to bee done, or hee is in diſtreſſe, and would have deliverance, and hee thinkes this is the way, or none; and therefore hee is earneſt to have it done: now it is good, in this caſe, to leave it to the LORD, to make our requeſts knowne to him; and when wee have done that, to bee no further carefull, but leave it to the *Lord*, to doe it his owne way; for hee is moſt skilfull.

If you take a skilfull Workeman, and ſay no more to him but thus: Sir, I pray you doe mee ſuch a thing, if it were the bringing of water, or the ſetting up of a building, it may bee, hee will goe away to worke, that thou knoweſt not what it meanes, and yet thou wilt truſt him: why then wilt thou not truſt GOD, and ſuffer him to goe his owne way? for when thou art croſſed in that thing, wherein (it may bee) of all others, thou wouldeſt not be croſſed, perhaps that ſame is the beſt way of all other, to bring the thing to paſſe that thou deſireſt. *Simile.*

Thirdly, as wee are deceived in the manner; and the meanes; ſo likewiſe wee miſtake the time: it may bee the *Lord* is willing to doe the thing, but not in that time that thou wouldeſt have him. When a man prayes to bee delivered Thirdly, or not in our time.

vered from ſuch trouble, from ſuch a diſtreſſe and affliction, hee thinkes the time very long, and ſaith, hee is not heard, becauſe hee is not delivered preſently: wee would all have the ſmarting plaiſter preſently tooke off; but the LORD is wiſer than wee, (as the Phyſician knowes what belongs to the Patient better than himſelfe) though hee doe it not preſently, yet hee will doe it in his good time. Therefore ſay not, thou art not heard, thou muſt take heed of taking delayes for denyals, the *Lord* will deferre to doe the thing, yet hee will doe it, and doe it in the beſt ſeaſon: for this is a generall Rule, *Gods time is the beſt time.* When thou commeſt to pray for a thing, thou wouldeſt have it done preſently, and thou thinkeſt it is the beſt time, all the controverſie betweene GOD, and thee is, which is the fitteſt time to have it done, thou thinkeſt perhaps preſently; *God* againe (it may bee) will doe it a yeere hence; ſurely he is the beſt chooſer, and wee ſhall finde it ſo; and therefore be content to wait his leaſure: For hee may have many ends in deferring it, it may bee to try thy faith, (as hee did the faith of the *Canaanite*, whom therefore hee would not heare;) it may be to increaſe thy holines, to put thy heart into a better temper, and therefore hee deferres longer. Hee meant to doe that for *Iacob*, that he did, yet hee ſuffered *Iacob* to *wraſtle all night*, and yet hee would not doe it till the inſtant of the morning appeared: ſo it was with *Daniel*, the anſwer

Simile.

Wee muſt not take *Gods* delayes for denyals.

Note.

Why God deferres to anſwer us.

Note.

ſwer went forth when hee began to pray, yet hee would have him inſtant, and continue in prayer; ſo (I ſay) the *Lord* may have many ends why hee deferres, let us therefore bee content to take his owne time.

Laſt of all, conſider this, when thou ſeekeſt to the *Lord*, to have any thing done, it is poſſible that it may croſſe ſome other paſſage of his providence; and in this caſe thou ſhouldeſt be content to be denied.

Anſw. 3. Our prayers may croſſe ſome paſſage of Gods providence.

But, you will ſay, why may not both bee accommodated?

Object.

I anſwere, ſo they ſhall, though thou ſee not how; for it is not with *God* as it is with man: if a man doe a good turne to one, two being earneſt petitioners whoſe well-being wholly depends on the ſucceſſe, hee muſt needs doe an ill turne to another; but *God* compoſeth all for the beſt: As for example, *David* deſired exceedingly to build a Temple; yet the *Lord* had another end; for hee had reſolved in his providence to make *Salomon* the builder of it, which indeede was much better for *David*: for what more than hee had could *David* have gotten, if he had done it? ſeeing the *Lord* gave him as full a reward, as if he had done it: for he tels him, that for that purpoſe of building GOD an houſe, he would build him an houſe: ſo that *David* had his end to the full, though *Salomon* did build the Temple. In like manner in the Land of *Canaan* amongſt the *Iſraelites* the *Lord* kept the *Canaanites*, but it was for their profit to exerciſe them, and keepe them in

Anſw.

Simile.

feare,

ſeare, leſt at any time they ſhould forget him. So alſo wee finde by experience, there are ſome paſſages of GOD's providence, that if wee knew; we would willingly yeeld to, in that it were better, that it ſhould be ſo, than otherwiſe; and therefore it is better, in ſome caſe, that we ſhould bee denyed.

FINIS.

THE

THE THIRD SERMON.

1 Thess. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

NOw wee proceede to that which remaines; for ſomething more wee may adde to the demonſtrating the time of *Gods* granting our petitions, and the meaſure of ſatisfying them, which wee touched a little before. See page 99.

For the time; wee are deceived in that wee thinke, when *God* deferres he denies; for many times *God* deferres for ſpeciall reaſons, and yet he grants the requeſts, in the fitteſt time for us, as the Phyſiciã knoweth the fitteſt time to give the Patient Phyſicke of one kind or another; and in *Similit.* this

this wee muſt yeeld to GOD; as he doth all his workes in the fitteſt time, ſo hee grants our petitions in the fitteſt time; there is an appointed time for any deliverance to be granted, for any bleſſing, for any comfort that wee need, and expect from his hands. Now, if our ſelves did rightly ſee it, wee would have things done for us in the moſt inconvenient time, wee would have the ſmarting plaiſter pulled off, before the wound be healed, whereas it is beſt for us to have it kept on: *Beloved*, you ſhall finde, that *God* divides betweene *Satan* and us, in this caſe, as we ſee *Revel.* 2. 10. *Satan ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon, and you ſhall be there for tenne dayes:* it was not ſo long as Satan would have had it, it may be, he would have had it ten and ten too; nor againe, it was not ſo ſhort as *God* would have had it, but GOD ſets downe the time betweene them both: and therefore we muſt reſt upon him, and thinke that many times there is great reaſon, why we ſhould be deferred, when wee aske things at his hands. Now you ſhall find *God* deferres for one of theſe cauſes, for the moſt part:

Simile.

Revel. 2. 10.

Note.

Foure reaſons of Gods deferring to grant our requeſts.

1 To try our faith.

Sometimes, for the tryall of our faith, as wee ſee, he deferred to grant to the woman of *Canaan*, although he did meane to grant her requeſt, yet hee deferred long, that hee might put her to the tryall; and you ſee, ſhee was no loſer by it, but when ſhe held out in her prayers, ſhe had her requeſt granted to the full.

2 To humble us more.

Sometimes, hee deferres to grant it, that wee may be more humbled, as you know, *Paul* prayed earneſtly

earnestly, but *God* told him, that he would deferre him, because he needed more humilitie: so he deferred to grant the request that the men of *Israel* put up to him against *Benjamin*, when the cause was just, and *God* intended to helpe them, yet they fell before their enemies twice, though they fasted and prayed; his end was, as we see in the Text, that they might be more humbled, that their hearts might be more broken, that they might be more fitted to receive it.

3 To enable us to use his blessings, when we have them.

Againe, sometimes *God* deferres, that we might be more able to use those blessings that he means to bestow upon us: so he deferred to raise *Ioseph* to preferment; so he deferred to bring *David* to the Kingdome; that those afflictions that they endured, might the better fit them to enjoy so great prosperitie, as he had provided for them afterwards.

4 To make us to prize his blessings. *Simile.*

And lastly, hee deferres, that hee might set a higher price upon his blessings, that he might inhaunce the price of them: as the fisher drawes away the bait, that the fish might follow it the more; so *God* with-holds his blessings, that wee might have a greater edge set upon our desires, that wee might pray harder for them, that wee might prize them more, when wee have obtained them.

Concerning the measure, if God gives us not so much as we aske.

Now, as hee doth thus for the time, and as wee are often deceived in the time, in taking delayes for denyals; so likewise wee are often deceived in the measure: Many times, *God* grants the things that wee would have; but because wee

have not so large a measure as wee expect, therefore wee thinke wee have it not at all, and that the *Lord* hath denyed us our prayers, when indeed hee hath not; for a lesser measure, many times, may serve as well as a greater: as GOD saith to *Paul*, *My grace is sufficient for thee.* Though the temptation doe abide upon us, if there be sufficient grace to keepe us in a continuall conflict, and warre against it, if there be sufficient grace to obtaine pardon, to uphold, and to comfort us in it, it is enough, it may bring us to Heaven, wee have a deliverance from it, even when wee seeme not to be delivered; though wee have not so full a victorie as wee would have, yet that grace may be sufficient.

A lesse measure may serve as well as a greater. Cleared in Instances. 1 Wealth. *Psal.* 37. 16.

You shall see this almost in all the things wee have occasion to request at GODS hands, That a lesser measure may serve as well as a greater. Take it first in outward things.

A little wealth may serve, as well as great revenues: as in *Psal.* 37. 16. *A little that the righteous hath, is better than the great revenues of the wicked*; because a little, when GOD shall fill it with his blessings, it shall serve the turne as well: but, if a man hath great revenues, and GOD blowes upon them, and leaves an emptinesse in them; if a man have great revenues, if hee have great outward comforts; yet if there be an emptinesse; if there be a vanitie in them, if they bee as the huske without the graine, as the shell without the kernell, as they are often, though there be a great bulke, and they seeme very fit to comfort us, yet they will

Vanitie.

will doe us little good; whereas a little, on the other side, with *Gods* blessing, will do much good: for in this case it is as 'twas with *Manna*, *Those that had little, had sufficient, and those that gathered over, had never a whit the more*; that is, for their use and comfort. You know, the little that *Daniel* had, it nourished and strengthened him, as much as the great portion of the Kings meat, that others had; and therefore a little, in this kind, may serve as well as much.

And so likewise, a little grace may be so used, and improved, that it may enable you to doe much, it may preserve you from sinning against GOD, as well as a great measure. For the confirmation of this, looke to *Rev.* 3. 8. which is a notable place for this purpose: it is said there to the Church of *Philadelphia*, *Thou hast a little strength*; they had but a little strength, and yet you see there what that little strength did: *Thou hast but a little strength, and yet thou hast kept my word, and hast not denyed my Name.* There were but two things for them to doe, to keepe his Word, and to be kept from running out to the denial of his Name, and committing other sins: now the little strength they had, was sufficient for these ends. So that we see, he findes no fault with that Church; other Churches that had more strength, it may be, they fell into greater sinnes. But this is a rule which is true, you will find it true in all observations through the Scriptures, That sometimes those that have great grace, notwithstanding fall into great sinnes, they may bee subject to some

a Instance in grace.

Rvtel. 3. 8.

Those that have more grace may fall, when weake ones stand.

ſtrong prevailing luſt; as *David*, you know, had a great grace, and yet, wee ſee, he was ſubject to great ſinnes together with it.

And againe, a man may have but a little grace, and yet that little grace may be ſo ordered, and husbanded, and improved, that that little grace may keepe him from ſinne, more than the other. This muſt be warily underſtood, not but that great grace enables a man to doe greater workes than the other, it enables a man, in the ordinary courſe, to reſiſt greater temptations, more than leſſe grace; but yet, (I ſay for our comfort, that) though a man have but a little ſtrength, as it is ſaid in the place newly mentioned, *Rev.* 3. in that little ſtrength, *I have ſet a doore open to thee*; it opened the doore of heaven wide enough, ſo that no man could ſhut it.

Note in what ſenſe this is to be taken.

Revel. 3.

And as we ſay of grace, ſo likewiſe for gifts; ſmaller gifts, meaner gifts may ſerve the turne many times, as well as greater gifts: for (you know) a little finger, a ſmall hand, may ſerve to thread a needle, as well as a greater, and (it may be) will doe it better; for in the Church there are varieties of operations, and variety of functions, and meaner gifts may ſerve for the diſcharge of ſome operations, of ſome ſervices for the Church as well as greater. And therefore, as there are variety of functions, ſo there are varietie of members, ſome ſtronger, ſome weaker, and the weaker may ſerve, in ſome caſes, as well as the ſtronger; a little Boate may doe better in a ſmall River, than a greater Ship; ſo a man that

3 Inſtance in gifts.

Simile.

Simile.

hath

hath but meane gifts, may serve meane capacities, as well as greater and better: and therefore thinke not that things are denied, when the thing is granted, not in such a measure as wee desire. Lastly, to be faithfull in a little gift, will bring as great a reward, as to be faithfull in greater. *Thou hast bin faithfull in little*, may *make* a man *ruler over much*, and may bring a great increase of the *talents* after: Therefore let not a man be discouraged, if he have not so great a measure as others have.

Faithfulnesse in little brings as great a reward as in more.

So likewise, if a man desire patience & strength to goe thorow all varietie of conditions, thorow all the troubles he meets with: as sometimes the *Lord* layes a great burthen upon a mans shoulders, and gives him great strength to beare it; sometimes againe he gives but a little strength, and then hee proportions the burthen to it; for is it not all one, whether the burthen bee great, and the strength answerable, or the burthen bee lesse, and the strength little? Sometimes he takes away calamity quite, sometimes he layes it upon a man, and gives him as much strength as enables him to beare it, and that is as good as if it were removed; else, what is the meaning of that, *You shall have an hundred fold with persecution*, but that you shall have so much joy and strength in persecution, that it shall bee all one as if you wanted it? So wee see *Heb.* 5.7. when Christ prayed for deliverance, in that great house of triall, the Text saith, *He was heard in the things he feared*, and yet, wee see, the cup did not passe from him, but onely hee was strengthened to beare it;

4 Instance, in crosses and afflictions.

Simile.

Heb. 5.7.

Note.

and so it is in this case. All which may serve for a full answer to that, that we be not mistaken in judging our prayers not to bee heard, when they are heard.

Dangers of omitting, or neglecting prayer.

1 And now, *Beloved*, what remaines but that wee set our selves to the duty, to doe that wee are exhorted unto heere, namely to *Pray continually*, that is, to pray very much, to keepe at least a constant course in it; for first, if we doe neglect it, we doe but robbe God of his mercies, we take them without his leave.

2 Againe, we are guilty of the sinne of unthankfulnesse, for we ought to *give thankes in all things*.

3 Besides, we neglect his worship, for you know prayer is a part of his worship, and the neglect of it from day to day, or at any time, when we omit it, is a neglect of that worship and service we owe unto him.

4 And moreover, wee doe not onely suffer sin to lye unforgiven, which is very dangerous, but also

5 wee deprive our selves of blessings, and bring a

6 curse upon us; nay wee suffer our hearts to grow hard, and to be distempered: for from our neglect of prayer comes that deadnesse of spirit, that worldly mindednesse, and unaptnesse to pray, to heare the word, and to keep the Sabboth: for what else is the reason, why those that have beene forward and zealous professours, in former times, have lost their light, and fallen from their place; I say, what is the reason of it, when they were sometimes *fervent in spirit serving the Lord*? but because that fire was not kept alive with the fuel of prayer,

Why men decline in their graces.

er; and when they declined from that pitch, from that degree of faith, which they had obtained, you ſhall finde that it did commonly ariſe from remiſneſſe in this duty. Therefore we ſay to ſuch, *Repent, and amend, and doe your firſt workes*; that is, uſe your former diligence, renew that, and that will renew grace and ſtrength againe: therefore take heed of being negligent, and remiſſe in this duty. Wee have great cauſe to be encouraged to it, for there is not a faithfull prayer that we make ſhalbe loſt, but they come up into remembrance. And therfore you muſt conſider with your ſelves, not onely what you doe for the preſent, but what ſtocke of prayers you have layd up. You know a man may have much in bils and bonds, as well as in preſent money; ſo there is a certaine ſtocke of prayer, a certaine treaſure layd up, that ſhall not be forgotten. The husbandman lookes not only upon the graine that he hath in his garner, but hee lookes upon that which is ſowne, though it be out of his hand, yea, he reckons that the better of the two; ſo thoſe prayers that have beene ſowne, (it may be, many yeeres agoe) are ſuch as will bring in a ſure increaſe. Therefore let us be exhorted to be conſtant in this duty, to bee frequent therein, to *continue in it, watching thereto with perſeverance.*

Benefit of frequency, and diligence in prayer.

No faithfull prayer is loſt.

Simile.

Simile.

And now wee have diſpatched this wee will come to anſwer ſome caſes of conſcience that fall out in the performance of this duty, which are divers.

Nine caſes of conſcience concerning psayer.

Firſt, that is one; What ſhall a man judge of *Caſe* 1.

About wandring thoughts in prayer.

his prayers, when they are accompanied with wandring thoughts, whether those prayers are such as *God* wholly refuseth; or what he is to doe in such a case, when he is subject to wandring thoughts, to vanitie of minde, and distemper in the performance of that dutie?

Answ. To this I answer, that wee must distinguish of the cause whence these wandring thoughts arise.

1 The cause of them, is weakenesse.

Sometimes they arise, not so much from our own neglect, as from weakenesse, from temptation; and in such a case, *God* layes them not so much to our charge. As for example; one that aymes at a marke, and doth his best to hit the marke; yet, if he hath a hand, or an arme, that hath the Palsey in it, or if one jogge him while he is about it, the fault was not so much in him; it was not want of good will to doe it, nor want of diligence; but either it is his weakenesse, or it is an impediment cast in by another: so it is in this case; this wandring of minde proceedes from a naturall infirmitie and imbecilitie that hangs upon the nature of man, which is not so able to keepe it selfe close to such a spirituall businesse: and this, *God* considers; for he is wise, and *knows whereof wee are but flesh.*

Simile. When a weake servant goes about a businesse, though he doe it not so well as a stronger, yet a man is wise to consider, that the servant is but weake: in like manner, the *Lord* considers the naturall weakenesse that we are subject unto, and he deales mercifully with us, in such a case.

Simile. for herein a man is as one that hath a sore in his

his hand, but he hath a palsey-arme, and therefore he cannot keepe it steddy, though he have a mind to doe it.

So also in the other case is it, when he is jogged in his shooting by another, that is, when Satan interrupts him, who is alwayes diligent to hinder him in such a duty; in this case, God chargeth it not upon him, neither doth hee cast us off, nor reject our prayers because of that. 2 Temptation.

But on the other side, when this wandring of mind shal rise from meer negligence on our part, from prophanenesse, from want of reverence, because wee do not intend holy duties as we ought, we come not to them with that conscionablenes, with that carefulnesse as we should doe, in this case it is a great sinne, and this moves the Lord to anger, when we performe that duty in that manner, when wee doe not so much as set our selves about it with our streng th, but suffer our mindes to wander without any resistance. 3 Negligence.

Or secondly, when we our selves bee the cause of it, by admitting of loose thoughts, by suffring our selves to bee worldly minded, by suffring an indisposition to grow upon us, and not labouring to resist it, and cast it off againe. You know, when an instrument is out of tune, if the lesson be never so good that is played upon it, yet it is unpleasant, because the instrument is out of tune, and whose fault is that? So, when thou comm'st to God, and suffer'st thy heart to bee distempered before, and doest not looke to keepe it in order, that is thy sinne, as well as thy prophanesse 4 Voluntarie admitting of vain thoughts.

Simile.

and

and neglect in the very time of the performance.

And by this you may learne, how to judge of wandring thoughts in the performance of this duty, and likewise you may see how to prevent them. The way to prevent them, is first, to keepe our hearts in tune before, to have them ready, as *the wise man hath his heart at his right hand*; that is, he hath it ready when he hath it to use. When a man is to use his horse, he doth not suffer him to runne up and downe in the pastures wildely, but will have him under bridle; so wee should keepe our hearts in frame, that they may be ready to do us service in such an holy duty, when wee have need of them.

How to prevent wandring thoughts in prayer.

Simile.

Secondly, we must be diligent, when we come to performe the duty, that though our minds do wander, yet we may be ready to recall them presently, to set our selves to it with all diligence. So much for answering this first case.

Case 2. About indisposednes, and dulnesse, and unaptnesse to prayer.

The second Case is, what a man is to do, when hee findes a great indisposition to prayer, such a dulnesse and deadnesse in him, that hee knowes not how to goe about the duty, and he thinkes, if he do it, it were as good be undone.

Answ.

To this I answer briefly, that in all such cases, a man is bound notwithstanding to performe it, let his heart bee never so much out of temper, let there be never so great a dulnesse, and deadnesse of spirit upon him, yet he is bound to doe it.

Object.

But you will say, Why, but I am altogether unfit.

Answ.

I answer, That a man by setting himselfe upon the

the worke shall gather a fitnesse, though he were unfit at the first. You know, members that are benummed, yet by using them, they get life and heat, and come, in the end, to bee nimble enough; so it is with the heart, in this case, when it is benummed, the very using of it makes it fit for the duty. You know, wood though it be greene, yet if it be long blowed, at the length it will bee dry, and take fire, so it is with the heart, a man may bee long about getting it on the wing, yet with much adoe he may doe it; and therefore he ought to doe this duty in such a case, yea, so much the rather, because there is never more need of calling upon GOD, than at such time: for then a man lyes most exposed to temptation, then, if any sinne come, hee is ready to be overtaken with it, he is unfit for any thing: and therefore, if ever he have need to call upon *God*, it is at that time.

Simile.

Simile.

Never more need to pray, than when we are most indisposed.

Note.

But you will say, It may bee GOD will not accept it.

Object.

I answer briefly, Although a mans heart bee so indisposed, that when hee hath done all hee can, yet hee can get no life, hee can get no heat in the performance of such a duty, yet *God* may accept that prayer, as well as that which is most fervent. And that you may understand this aright, you must take it with this distinction: for alwayes this dulnesse and deadnesse in praier, comes from one of these two causes.

Answ.

Causes of dulnesse.

One is, when GOD withdrawes his owne Spirit, that is, withdrawes not his Spirit altogether; (for there may be an helpe, where wee perceive it not,

not) but when he withdrawes the livelineſſe, and quickneſſe of his ſpirit; and in this caſe, if we doe our duty, if wee doe the beſt wee can, the *Lord* doth accept it, though hee hath not vouchſafed ſuch inlargement of our hearts, though hee hath not powred out his ſpirit upon us, in the performance of the duty, as at other times, but he gives a ſecret helpe, that perhaps we feele not, nor peradventure is ſo great as at other times; yet I ſay, when it ariſeth from his owne withdrawing of that fitneſſe, and we our ſelves are not negligent (which is the other cauſe) but endeavor as much as we can to doe our beſt, in this caſe *God accepteth the will for the deed*; as I have often ſaid to you, that rule alway holds good, when the impediment is ſuch as wee cannot remove, when the dulneſſe of ſpirit is ſuch as it is not in our power to remove it, though we have uſed our utmoſt diligence, in that caſe it is no hindrance. And therefore it is a great comfort unto us, that wee have uſed our diligence in this duty, and have imployed our beſt ſtrength to quicken our hearts; though it be not done, yet GOD accepts our prayers, as well as if they were performed in a more lively and fervent manner.

From negligence.

When indiſpoſition is no hinderance.

Caſe 3. About praying after a man hath committed ſome groſſe ſinne.

The next caſe is, what a man is to doe after he hath committed ſome great ſinne, after he hath wounded his conſcience; whether then, notwithſtanding hee muſt come, and keepe his conſtant courſe in praying, morning and evening, whether he ſhall be ſo bold, as to come into *God*s preſence, after he hath ſo exceedingly offended him?

To

To this I anſwer, that a man is bound (notwithſtanding any ſinne that he hath committed, be it what it will bee,) to keepe this courſe conſtantly in prayer, and not to omit it, not to keepe off, not to deferre it. And my ground for it is, becauſe this is a duty, it is a charge that *God* hath laid upon all, to *Pray continually*; that is, at the leaſt twice a day, as we ſhewed before, to keepe a conſtant courſe in it. Now it is certain, our failing in one thing muſt not excuſe us in another: when the duty lies on us, wee have no diſpenſation to be negligent in it; and therefore wee are bound to doe it.

Anſw. In this caſe, prayer is not to be neglected.

Reaſon 1. It is Gods command.

Note.

Againe, conſider this, that a particular offence doth not offend ſo much, as if we grow ſtrangers to GOD, as if wee grow to a generall rebellion againſt him. As, put the caſe, a child commits a great offence againſt his father, yet, if he runne away from his fathers houſe, and grow a ſtranger to him, that is more than the particular offence: for a generall rebellion muſt needs be more than the particular. And to give over calling upon *God*, to breake off that courſe, to grow a ſtranger to him, to runne away from his houſe, and (as it were) to be ready to give over all his ordinances, and a conſtant courſe of obedience to him, this is a generall rebellion, and is worſe than the particular; yea, ſuch a carriage, after ſinne committed, moves GOD to anger more than the ſinne it ſelfe: as many times, the contemptuous, negligent, rebellious carriage, after an offence, moves a maſter, a husband, or a parent more than the particular

Reaſon 2. Neglect in this is worſe than the ſinne wee commited before.

ticular falling though it were exceeding great.

Reason 5. It leaves the breach in the conscience open.

Besides, consider when a man commits a great sinne, hee makes a great gappe in his conscience, he makes a great breach there; and will you have that breach lye open? is not that very dangerous? is not that the way to bring in more sinne, and to suffer those good things that are in the heart to steale out? I will give you but one instance for this: You see, S. *Peter*, when he had committed a great sinne, in denying his Master, and forswearing of him too, yet, because he came in presently, and repented, and sought for pardon, (as you know he did,) hee was graciously preserved from running into further arrerages; for hee made up the gappe, he made up the breach by his true repentance.

If we recover not quickly out of a sinne, we adde more to it.

Wee see, on the other side, when *David* had committed that sinne with *Bathsheba*, and did not come unto *God*, as he should have done, to keepe his ordinary course in sacrificing unto him, in repenting, and renewing his repentance, and praying to him, you know, how many sinnes hee fell into. And likewise that was the case of *Salomon*; you know, to what a height he grew, by not comming to *God*, at his first failing: And therefore, I say, there is reason, that we should doe it; though the sinne be never so great, we ought to come in, and to keepe our course constantly.

Quest. But may I not stay till I bee more fitted, till my heart bee more softened, and more humbled?

Answ. Beloved, to stay in this case is dangerous, for the

the heart commonly growes more hard in sinne, by continuance; the conscience is more tender immediately after the sin is committed, than it is afterwards; and when thou stayest for more humility, thou findest lesse: And therefore, while the wound is greene, and when the fire hath taken newly hold, it is then best to quench it, before the wound be festered, before it hath continued long; for the heart will grow worse and worse, as it is *Heb.* 3.12. *Take heed that you be not hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne.* The meaning is this, when you commit a sinne, you thinke, if you stay a weeke, or a fortnight, or a month, you shall come in as well as at the first; no, sayth the Apostle, *while it is to day* come in, that is, doe it presently, for sin will deceive you, it will harden your heart before you be aware, it will make a distance betweene *God* and you, it will take you off from him, it will leade you further on: and therefore take heed, that your hearts be not hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne, that sinne doe not deceive you, which it will doe before you thinke of it. And therefore in this case you should do as you do with waters; when waters breake out a little, it is best to stop them presently, if you suffer them, they will make the breach greater, till at length you bee unable to stop them; so in this case, when you have committed a great sinne, come in speedily, before the wound grow incurable.

Staying for fitnesse after sin committed, we become more unfit.

Heb. 3.12.

Simile.

But you will say, What shall a man come into *Gods* presence, who is most holy, after he hath defiled

Object.

filed himselfe with some great sinne; is not this an unreverent thing?

Answ. We must come to God with a disposition turned from sinne.

I answer briefly, it is very true; if thou be bold to come into *Gods* presence with the same disposition wherewith the sinne was committed, with a minde so fashioned, and so framed; in that case thou doest exceedingly provoke him, this is a very high degree of prophaneneſſe: And therefore, when we say, thou must come in, and keepe a constant course in prayer; notwithstanding, the meaning is, you must come in with a disposition turned aside from your sinnes, and brought home to *God*, with a minde to abhorre that which is evill, and to cleave to that which is good; there must be this conversion of the minde to him, thou must not come in with the same disposition, that must be altered. So much shall serve for the answer to this Case.

Case 1. About a set forme of prayer.

Another Case is, whether wee may use a set forme of prayer; and likewise, whether it be sufficient?

Answ.

I need not say much to you; for I thinke there is none here that doubt of it, but that a set forme of prayer may be used: you know, Christ prescribed a forme; you know, there were certaine *Psalmes* that were prayers, that were used constantly; and therefore there is no doubt, but that a set forme may be used, for wee have those and other examples for it: And in the Church, at all times, both in the primitive times, and all along to the beginning of the reformed times, to *Luther* and *Calvins* time, still in all times the Church had

had set formes they used, and I know no objection against it of weight. One maine objection is this:

That in stinted prayer the spirit is straitned, when a man is tyed to a forme, then hee shall have his spirit (as it were) bounded and limited, that he cannot goe beyond that which is prescribed; and therefore, say they, it is reason a man should bee left to more liberty, (as hee is in conceived prayers,) and not tyed to a strict forme. *Object.*

To this I answer, even those men that are against this, and that use this reason, they doe the same thing daily in the congregation: for when another prayes, that is a set forme to him that heares it; I say, it is a forme to him: for put the case, that he which is an hearer, and doth attend another praying, suppose that his spirit be more inlarged, it is a straitning to him, hee hath no liberty to goe out, he is bound to keepe his minde intent upon that which the other prayeth: And therefore, if that were a sufficient reason, that a man might not use a set forme, because the spirit is straitned, a man should not heare another pray (though it be a conceived prayer) because, in that case, his spirit is limited; it may bee, the hearer hath a larger heart (a great deale) than hee that speakes and prayes; so that there is a bounding, and straitning, and a limiting of the spirit to him. And therefore that reason cannot be good. *Answ.* 1. They that object against a set forme of prayer, do the same thing. *Note.*

Againe, I answer, though the spirit be limited, at that time in publike, yet he hath a liberty at other *Answ.* 2. Wee have liberty at other times.

ther times, to pray as freely as he will in private; and therefore he is not so tied, but though at that time in the congregation he be, yet it is no generall tye; at another time, or immediately after, he may be as free as he will in secret.

Answ. 3. The spirit is not restrained in a set forme of prayer.

Againe, I answer, it is not a bond, or restraint of the spirit, because there is a tye of words; for the largenesse of the heart stands not so much in the multitude and variety of expressions, as in the extent of the affection: now then the heart may be very large, for all that; though hee be tyed in words, yet there is not a tye upon the affection, that may bee extended more, in putting up the same petition, when another man is more straitned: therfore there is no tye, and limit upon that. And this is enough to satisfie that case, that a set forme of prayer must be used.

Quest. Though a set forme may be used in prayer, yet that alone is not sufficient.

But now, if you aske, whether that be sufficient? whether a man may thinke, if he have been present at publike Prayer, (which is a commendable and religious thing to use constantly) I say, whether that be sufficient?

Answ.

My Beloved, this is a matter of some moment, to consider what wee ought to doe in this case, for we may be deceived in it; and I answer plainly, It is not sufficient: A man that is diligent in publike prayers, that keepes them morning and evening, if hee thinkes now hee hath discharged his duty, he is in a very great errour: and this is the reason, because they are not sufficient. Indeed they ought to be used constantly, for *God* is worshipped in the; & it is a more divine worship; for when

when GOD is honoured before many (as a man, when there are many ſpectators, more honour is done to him) it is a greater honour, which is when men joyne in this worſhip. Many other reaſons might bee produced for it, but that is not the thing I am now upon, to commend it to you; but I ſay, it is not ſufficient, although it ought to be done, becauſe there are many particular ſinnes, which cannot bee confeſſed in publike prayer, there are many particular wants, which in publike prayer you cannot unfold, and open, or expreſſe unto the *Lord*.

Simile.

5 Reaſons proving that a ſet forme of prayer is not ſufficient.

Reaſon 1.

Againe, the end of a ſet forme of prayer is to be an helpe for the private, (for the publike it is another caſe) a helpe that one may uſe that is yet exceeding weake: a child, that cannot goe, may have a prop to helpe it, but wee muſt not alway be children, we muſt not alway uſe that helpe.

Reaſon 2.

Simile.

Beſides, we muſt conſider this, that there is no man that hath any work of grace in his heart, but he is enabled in ſome meaſure to pray, without a ſet forme of prayer, hee is able to expreſſe his deſires to *God* in private, one way or other: There was never any man in any extreme want, but hee knew how to expreſſe himſelfe, where he had libertie to ſpeake; ſo it is in this caſe.

Reaſon 3.

Beſides, the ſpirit of a man hath greater libertie in private; there a man may *powre forth his ſoule to the Lord*, as *Hanna* ſaith, 1 *Sam.* 1. which in publike he cannot doe freely: there are many particular mercies, which hee hath cauſe to bee thankefull to *God* for.

Reaſon 4.

1 Sam. 1.

Reason 5.

Besides, there is a particular paines that a man is to take with his heart, from day to day, which in the publike common petitions, hee is not able to doe: for, *Beloved*, know this, that the prayer which is required from day to day, is not so much the performance of the duty, the doing of the taske, but the end is to keepe the heart in order; for if sinfull lusts grow upon it, and distempers, and worldly-mindednesse, the end of this duty is to worke them out againe, to renew repentance againe; and when there is a forgetfulnesse of the covenant, when grace growes weake, when good desires begin to languish, to renew, and recover them, to put fuell to them: and this is not done by the performance of the publike onely. And therefore, I say, though you performe it in your families, and meet in the Congregation, you must not thinke that this is enough, for you are bound to a private performance of this duty.

The end why prayer is used.

Case 5. About using the voyce, and about the gesture in secret prayer.

Againe, this is another Case, what a man is to doe in the private performance of this duty, whether hee bee bound alwaies to use his voyce? whether hee bee bound alwaies to such a kinde of gesture?

Answ.

I answer this briefly, (for there is no great difficulty in these things, and therefore I passe them over) for the gesture in publike, there is more heed to bee taken of that, because it is a publike and open worship of God; and therefore in publike the gesture is alway to be reverent. You know how often it is repeated, (in the Old Testament

ſtament eſpecially) that they *bowed downe, and worſhipped*, and ſo *Chriſt* looked up to heaven, *Paul kneeled downe*, and the reſt with him, and prayed; and many ſuch like expreſſions you have mentioned in the Scriptures: where you have prayer mentioned in publike, ſtill you ſhall find an expreſſion of ſome reverent geſture; therfore when wee appeare before the *Lord* in the publike performance of this duty, eſpeciall care muſt bee taken heereunto. In the private, the caſe is different, there variety of geſtures may be uſed, and I do not ſee but al manner of geſtures may be vſed; there are many examples for walking, and lying, and ſitting; onely this is to be taken heed to, that even in private, as far as may bee, the geſture bee ſuch as may both expreſſe the inward reverence in the heart; for elſe of the outward man, I ſee not but there is a libertie in that: And indeed I think this is the beſt rule in private, that that geſture be uſed, that doth moſt quicken, & doth help the duty moſt. Some geſture may bring a dulneſſe, and indiſpoſition, when another may quicken the body, & make it more fit for prayer: ſometimes lying is inconvenient, and ſometimes more convenient: And therefore, in this caſe, the beſt rule is to uſe that geſture, which quickens moſt, which helps moſt the duty. Some geſtures may breed a wearineſſe in the body, ſome may breed a dulnes; ſome are painefull to the body; all this is a hindrance to the duty, when as the change of it may quicken and helpe it forward.

Note. That geſture is to be uſed in private prayer that doth moſt quicken.

Now for the voyce, I ſay, for that, (as for the

gesture) it is not simply required: for *God is a spirit, and he will be worshipped in spirit.* Men that have eares, and bodies, they must have men speake to them: but *God*, that is a Spirit, delights in that which is like himselfe; and therefore all his eye is upon the inward behaviour of the Spirit. Besides, the spirit may speake to *God*, when the voyce doth not; as, you know, the *Angels* speake to *God*, and they speake one to another. The Schoolemen have great disputes about the speech of *Angels*, but this they agree in, that one *Angel* speakes to another after this manner: When any one hath a conceit in his mind of any thing, with a will that another should understand it, & that *God* should understand it, that is enough for the expression of it; so is it with the spirit of man, when hee hath such a petition in his heart, in his minde, and there is a desire in his will, that *God* should understand that petition, that is an offering it up to the *Lord*; it is as true a speaking to the *Lord*, as when you deliver it by an outward voyce; for the spirit agrees with the *Angels*, so farre as it is a spirit, and as they speake one to another, and to the *Lord*; so doth the spirit of man; though indeed the tongue be to be used, as it is said, *Iam.* 3. 9. *Therewith blesse wee God*, and therewith should wee pray among others, and before others, and speake before others: but when there is any cause to use the voyce in private, it is this, as far as it may quicken the heart, (as I say of gesture) and as far as thereby wee may keepe our thoughts from wandring. If the voyce were not used, perhaps

Iohn 4. 24.

Angels how they speake to God, and one another.

Iames 3. 9.

Why the voyce is used in prayer.

haps the thoughts would bee ſubject to more wandring, and wee ſhould not be ready to take notice of them, but they would ſlip before wee are aware; and therefore when the voyce is uſed, it muſt be to keepe in the thoughts. In ſome caſes, to omit the voyce is more convenient, when it may draw any other inconveniencie; but that is left to every mans particular caſe, as hee ſhall find the uſe of it to hinder him, or further him. And ſo much ſhall ſerve for this Caſe.

FINIS.

THE FOURTH SERMON.

1 Thess. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

Caſe 6. About want of leiſure to pray by reaſon of preſent buſineſſes to bee ſpeedily diſpatched.

ANother Caſe of conſcience in the buſineſſe of prayer is, what a man is to doe, when hee is in a ſtrait of time, by reaſon of ſome weighty buſineſſe, that requires a quicke and ſudden diſpatch, and gives him not the leiſure and liberty, that otherwiſe hee might have had?

To this I anſwer, you ſhall find, that in Scriptures the prayers of Saints have been ſometimes longer; and ſometimes ſhorter. Our Saviour Christ, you know, ſometimes ſpent a whole night

night in prayer: Surely, he did not take so much time alwayes; and no doubt, wee have liberty sometimes to be longer, sometimes shorter, according as our occasions will permit. But yet this you must remember, that though the businesse bee great, yet that businesse that concernes the salvation of our soules, and the worship of *God*, is greater: And therefore, before and above all other services, this is still to be preferred: for it is a businesse of greater moment: take heed then you give a just weight to your businesse, and not suffer every small occasion that comes in, to thrust out this duty; for heere you keepe not the due proportion, but neglect the greater, and take the lesse.

Matters concerning salvation to be preferred before outward businesse.

Besides, doe you not say, when you have great businesse in hand, that a man must have a dining time, and a sleeping time, &c. Why may wee not say as well, A man must have a praying time; is it not necessary? You know what *Iob* sayth, you know the course that he kept in reading the Word, (for that is clearely meant in that place) *It was more precious to him than his appointed food:* that is, he had rather omit his usuall meales, (for that he means by *his appointed food*) than to omit a constant course in performing those holy duties. Therefore, I say, it ought carefully to be tooke heed of, that wee omit it not, except it be in a very great strait, which if it should happen, we may be short in it, *God* ties us not so exactly you see, for no rules are set down in the Scriptures wherein we are tyed precisely to such an houre, to such a time,

We should allot time for prayer, as well as for other businesse.

a time, but *God* in mercy, and in wisedome, hath left it to our liberty: only observe, this is the command, *Pray continually*, doe it exceeding often, at the least, keepe a constant course in it, (as wee heard before) though you should be the shorter in it.

Cautions about shortnes of prayer in great straits. *Caution* 1. Husband time well 3 wayes.

Now let these five Cautions be observed:

1

First, take heed that the straitning come not from your ill husbandry, that is, from your ill husbanding of time; for, if a man were carefull to redeeme time before, (it may be) hee need not be put to such a strait as he is at that time, when he is to performe this duty. Suppose you have a journey to go, that requires much time, and you must be gone early; you may so husband the time before, that you may get time enough for your journey, and for the performance of this duty: and so for other businesse, as I sayd in the morning, you should labour to sequester your selves to performe this duty of prayer; and therfore take heed you be good stewards of your time, and that you husband it well.

2

And likewise, this is another part of husbanding your time, that you let not that which is very precious, goe for things of small moment; for that is ill husbandry. You should redeem the time, & buy it with the losse of something: You finde time enough to bestow in the weightiest businesses of your calling, in things that belong to the good of man, muchmore should you in this that belongs to the worship of *God*: And therefore, if it may be, redeeme it with some losse; so

you

you ought to husband it, otherwise you redeeme not time as you ought. This is the first Caution that ought to bee observed, to husband and redeeme the time well.

The second is, if wee bee straitned at any time, recompence it at another time: for if it be not a feined excuse and pretence, if you frame not to your selves a straitning, when you have liberty, you will bee carefull to spend more time in it at another season; by that you shall know your sincerity in it, that it is true, and that it is not an excuse, and a putting off.

Caution 2. Recompence it another time.

Moreover, another Caution to be observed is, that you take not too much businesse, upon you: if you be straitned with businesse, and therefore cannot be so large in the performance of this duty, as otherwise you would if you did not take so much upon you, your selves are the cause of it. And therefore, he that takes lesse, hee that spends more time in the things that belong to salvation, he hath made the better choise; as *Mary* made a better choise than *Martha*, though her imployment also were good.

Caution 3. Take heed of too much businesse.

Likewise, as you must not pester your selves with too much businesse, so likewise you must take care, that your mindes bee not too much intent upon them, for too much intention of mind upon businesse, causeth distraction in prayer, and causeth us to post over the duty, as well as too much businesse: when a mans minde shoots it selfe too farre in businesse, when it is too much occupied about it, when it is too much intent,

Caution 4. Be not too intent upon businesse.

when

when the ſoule cleaves too faſt upon the buſines, and cannot looſe it ſelfe to the performance of ſpirituall duties, which require freedome.

Caution 5. Looke to the ground of the ſtrait.

The laſt Caution is, that the ſtrait riſe not from diffidence in *God*, and confidence in the uſe of the meanes; for it falls out oft times, when wee have buſineſſe of moment in hand, there is a turning, and poſting from one creature to another, from the uſe of one meanes to another, that wee cannot get time in prayer, not ſo much for want ſimply, but becauſe wee mind the meanes too much, wee intend them too much, we doe not truſt *God* enough with the buſineſſe; if wee did, we might ſpend leſſe time in them, and more in ſeeking to him. So much for that Caſe.

Caſe 7. About uſe of the meanes.

Another Caſe of conſcience in this buſineſſe of calling upon GOD is, What a man is to doe for the uſe of the meanes? for when wee are bid to pray, and ſeeke to GOD, it is an ordinary queſtion amongſt us; But may wee not uſe the meanes too?

Anſw. Reaſons why meanes muſt be uſed. *Reaſon* 1. Elſe our deſires are not good.

To this I anſwer, That prayer is ſo farre from excluding the meanes, that it includes them; for if the deſire bee fervent, when wee deſire any thing at GODS hands, it will make us diligent in the uſe of the meanes, to uſe a convenient diligence, as it will make you earneſt in ſeeking to *God*, and in putting up your requeſt to him. For, if a man ſhall pray and bee negligent in the uſe of the meanes, I will bee bold to ſay it; it is but like the deſire of the ſluggard, that is, a languiſhing, and fainting deſire: He deſires, but his

his ſoule hath nothing; for he deſires, but he puts his hand into his boſome: the deſires which you expreſſe, when you pray, they are not fervent, they are not earneſt, if you bee remiſſe in the uſe of the meanes. Hee that deſires grace, and ſtrength againſt ſinfull luſts and temptation, and yet is remiſſe in the uſe of the meanes, by which grace ſhould bee increaſed, and ſtrength gained, to reſiſt thoſe corruptions and temptations, certainely his deſires are but vaine and empty deſires.

Reaſon 2. Elſe it is a ſigne we truſt not God.

Beſides, it is an argument that we truſt not in GOD, that wee make no accompt of our prayers, except wee be diligent in the uſe of the meanes, therefore wee are farre from excluding them; for, if you ſeeke to GOD, and truſt to your prayers, and thinke that they will prevaile with him, it will worke this effect, that you will be carefull to uſe ſuch meanes, as *God* hath ordained to bring the thing to paſſe. Even as, if a man ſeeke to a Phyſician, to ſuch a Phyſician as hee truſts to, into whoſe hands hee would put his life; when this Phyſician proſcribes ſuch a courſe, ſuch a dyet, and ſuch a thing to bee taken at ſuch a time, the more hee reſts upon the Phyſician, the more carefull hee will bee to obſerve his preſcription and rules: And ſo, in this caſe, the more you reſt on *God*, the more carefull you will be to uſe ſuch meanes as hee hath appointed, when hee hath ſaid, theſe and theſe meanes are to bee uſed. In this caſe, I ſay, it is a ſigne your prayers are more

Simile.

to

to purpoſe, when you are diligent in the uſe of them; when you dare not ſleight nor neglect them.

Reaſon 3. It is that wee pray for.

Againe, you muſt conſider this, that when wee pray, at any time, wee doe not pray to have any thing done without meanes; but wee pray to have a bleſſing upon the meanes; and, if wee pray for a bleſſing upon the meanes, our minde is not that they ſhould be omitted: for, you know, *God* doth all things by ſecond cauſes, hee ſaves us not without our ſelves, that is, hee uſeth us as inſtruments, hee doth every thing by men, by creatures, and by meanes; and the end of our prayers is, not to have them done without meanes, but to have a bleſſing powred downe upon them. But that which is chiefly to bee obſerved to cleere this point to you is this; That prayer is not the onely meanes, it is but part of the meanes to bring any thing to paſſe.

Reaſon 4. Prayer not the onely meanes.

There are two things to effect a buſineſſe, that is, prayer and meanes both: wee doe not ſay prayer is the onely meanes, indeede, then the other were excluded; but ſince it is but a part, and the other makes up the totall meanes of bringing any thing to paſſe, it doth not exclude them, but they may bee both joyned together, prayer and the uſe of the meanes. This is enough to ſhew that we may uſe meanes, wee may pray, and lay our hand on the Plough, wee may ſeeke to *God*, and be diligent, and as diligent as any body elſe. But now theſe three Cautions are to be obſerved.

Cautions about the uſe of the meanes.

The

The first is, That, if wee doe use meanes, wee should use those that are right; for if you trust *God*, and depend upon him, you will not steppe out to any inordinate meanes, nor use lawfull meanes in an inordinate manner: If you doe so, it is an argument that your prayers are of no value in your owne esteeme, for you doe not rest on GOD, which if you did, you would never use any other meanes, than hee hath appointed. *Caution* 1. Wee must use right meanes.

Secondly, though you use the meanes, and pray both, yet you must so use the meanes and prayer both, as that your confidence rests not onely thereupon: for it is one thing to use the meanes, & it is another thing to have confidence in them. And therfore wee say to you in this case, that you must doe as he that useth the light of the Sun; he so useth the light, as that hee hath an eye upon the Sun, from whom that light comes; for hee knowes, that if the Sun were set, the light would bee gone. Or as hee that takes water in a Cisterne, or River, hee so takes it, as that hee hath an eye to the Fountaine, hee knowes if the Fountaine were stopped, the River would bee quickly dryed up: So you should thinke with your selves, if I use any meanes, any creature, any instrument to bring things to passe, mine eye must bee upon *God*: for all the helpe that we have from the creature, it is but as a beame to the helpe that comes from *God* himselfe. And therefore you must doe in this case, as Physicians are wont to doe, they put many ingredients into a thing, but it is one principall *Caution* 2. Not trust the meanes. *Simile.* *Simile.* *Simile.*

pall ingredient, amongst the rest, that he makes account will cure the disease. So doe in this case, make use, both of prayer, and of the meanes; yet you must know, that neither prayer nor the meanes are the principall effector of the thing, but the principall meanes indeed, wherein your confidence is to be, is *God* that doth bring every thing to passe: There is no good in the City, nor no evill, but he doth it; you know hee takes all to himselfe. All the meanes, by which good and ill is conveyed to you, doe not doe the thing, they are but the *vehicula*, they are but the instruments; as the Beese and the Wine wherein the Physicke is taken, but it is the Physicke and the medicine that cures; So all the meanes cannot doe it, it is the helpe and the power of GOD, the efficacy that comes from him, that brings things to passe; therefore that must bee remembred, use the meanes continually, but with dependance upon GOD, with an eye upon him, let not your hearts rest upon them onely; for if they doe, it is an inordinate use of them.

Simile.

Caution 3. Not to sticke to particular meanes.

Lastly, you must take heed of sticking in any particular meanes; for if you doe, it is a signe that you trust not GOD as you ought to doe. It is a fault commonly, we pitch upon such a particular way, and wee thinke that must doe it, or nothing. Now if GOD be trusted to, he hath more wayes to the wood than one, he hath more means to bring a thing to passe than one: And therefore wee must leave it to him, who often doth it best

by

by another meanes than wee dreamed of. As for example; *David* had a promise of the Kingdome: Now, when hee had the Kingdome of *Iudah*, yet you know, the Kingdome of *Israel* stood out; for *Ishbosheth* had the Kingdome, and *Abner* was his chiefe Captaine: besides, in his comming into his Kingdome of *Iudah*, we see how *God* wrought the businesse, without his device, by a meanes that he never thought of, in that battell, when *Saul* was killed, and so many of his sonnes, there was so much way made for him, when himselfe used no meanes to bring it to passe. Afterward, when the Kingdome of *Israel* was kept from him, and hee had onely *Iudah*, wee see, *God* caused division betweene *Ishbosheth*, and *Abner* his chiefe Captaine: upon that comes *Abner*, and offers to *David* the whole Kingdome, but yet he was but a reconciled enemie; and what *Abner* might have done, he knew not. Therefore, *God* by his providence, (though *Ioab* sinned in it) caused *Abner* to be taken away by *Ioab*: when this was done, yet *Ishbosheth* was alive still; then were there two men set by the providence of *God*, (though it were a great sinne in them) to take away his head; and so the Kingdome came wholly to *David*: for, there were but two sonnes; *Mephibosheth*, that was lame of his feet; and *Ishbosheth*, that was lame in his minde; a weake man, unable to manage so great and weightie a businesse, to purpose. So *God* brought the businesse to passe, by a way that *David* thought not of. Therefore, though wee may use meanes; yet, after the use of them, wee

must depend upon *God*, and leave it to *God*, to take one meanes, or other. We must doe in this case, as wee doe when wee goe to a man that is very skilfull to doe a worke for us: If wee goe to a Carpenter, and tell him wee have such a thing to be done; or, if we goe to those that we call *Aquarioli*, that bring water from place to place, we tell him, this is our desire: but how he will worke, and which way he will bring it to passe, we know not, and yet we trust such an one; for we say, He is an honest man of his word, and if he have undertaken it, it is enough: Why then will you not trust *God*, that goes so much beyond us, that hath an infinite Wisdome, and an infinite power? And therefore let us all so use the meanes, that withall we keepe our dependance upon him; that wee leave it to him, to use this or that meanes as it pleaseth him: for sometimes, it may bee, hee takes away that which wee are about; sometimes hee leaves us partly destitute, and finds a way of his owne, that wee might trust to him, and bee confident of his Power and Wisdome, in that he is able to do the thing wee desire. So much likewise shall serve for this Case.

Wee are more apt to trust men than *God*.

Why God workes not by our meanes.

Case 8. About praying in faith, when a man wants a particular promise, that the thing which he asketh shall be granted.

Another Case is, What it is to pray in faith? You know that is required. Now there is a common error in this point: for a man may say, If I pray for the salvation of another, I have no promise; how can I pray in faith? When a man prayes to be guided in such a businesse, to have such an enterprize to be brought to passe, to have deliverance from such a trouble, such a sickenesse,

from

from such a calamitie, that he lyes under, he finds no particular promise, and for ought he knowes, it shall never be granted: How can he then be said to pray in faith? For, to pray in faith, is to beleeve that the thing wee pray for, shall be brought to passe and accomplished.

Answ.

I answer, That to pray in faith, is to goe as far as the promise goes. Now no particular man hath any particular promise, that he shall have such a deliverance, that hee shall have such a particular mercy granted him; and therefore it is not required to beleeve, that that particular thing should be done.

Object. What faith is required in prayer.

But you will say, What faith is it then that is required?

Answ.

I say, it is enough to beleeve that GOD is a Father, that hee is ready to heare; and not onely that hee is readie to heare, but that hee is readie to doe that which is best for me, in such a particular: for both are required, That you beleeve him to bee well affected towards you, as a Father, as one that tenders your good; and not only so, but that hee will doe that, in that particular, that shall be most for his owne glory, and for your good: And, if you doe so, you pray in faith; though (for the particular) you know not, whether it shall bee granted or no. Indeed, if wee had a particular promise, as *Elias* had, that it should not raine, &c. in that ease, wee were bound to beleeve in particular; but not having that, wee are not tyed unto it: for the promise is the object of faith, and the habit is

Wee are not bound to beleeve, that the particular thing shalbe granted which we pray for.

not to worke beyond the obiect; for the obiect is the rule and the limit of the habit: therefore you may pray in faith, when yet you have no ground to beleeve, and to thinke, that that particular thing should be granted. For example: If a Father pray, that his sonne may have grace wrought in his heart, that his soule may be saved; it may be the LORD will never doe it: or, if one friend pray for another, to the same purpose, though the thing bee not done, yet the prayer returnes into his bosome, hee is no loser by it, there is a reward belongs to him, for seeking to GOD in sincerity; it is his duty, that hee should doe so. The like I may say for every other particular case. And this encouragement you may have, That there is never any particular prayer put up, wherein you seeke things that are not granted, but you mistake in it; for, if you beleeve thus farre, as I said to you, be sure that your prayers are accepted, *God* will doe that which is best for you, and your prayers shall not be lost. So much also for that.

If our prayers be not granted, we mistake in them.

Case 9. About a mans knowledge that his prayer is heard.

The last case is, How shall a man know whether his prayer be heard, or not?

Answ. For answer to this, wee will give you this one rule, (and that is as farre as wee can goe) That those prayers that are made by the assistance of *Gods* holy Spirit, it is certaine, they are alwayes heard: if you finde that at any time, you need make no question, but that GOD heares it, and will doe the thing, observing the Cautions that wee have given you heretofore, that is, for the meanes,

meanes, the manner, the time, and the measure: for it cannot be, but that when the heart is inlarged by GOD's owne Spirit, and the prayer is an expression of holy desires, the LORD alwayes heares. That place is cleare for it, *Rom.*8. 27. that *He knowes the meaning of the Spirit:* that is, he so knowes it, that hee hearkeneth to it, that hee alwayes accepts of it: and therefore, when you come in such a case, at any time, that your hearts are inlarged in a speciall manner: Marke, I say, when your hearts are inlarged in a speciall manner, and that, with holy desires, certainely, then GOD meanes to grant our requests: hee would not send his spirit to bee an intercessour in your hearts, if hee did not meane to doe it: for, on the contrary, he withholds his spirit, he gives us not that inlargement of heart. Only this distinction must be carefully remembred; you may be sometime very earnest, (the parent may bee very earnest for his childe, as *David* was for his; and *Moses* for ought wee see, was earnest to have gone into the Land of *Canaan*, they were things that they desired) and yet that may be an expression of naturall desires. In which case a man may bee very earnest, and yet hee cannot build upon it, to say, my heart is much inlarged in prayer, and therefore I shall be heard.

*Rom.*8.27.

When God will grant our prayers, and when not.

Note.

But observe this, when the heart is inlarged with holy desires, and that in a speciall manner, somewhat more than ordinary, as that, you see, it is the worke of the spirit of GOD, quickning your heart, opening it wide, strengthening and

What kinde of inlargement of heart argues that our prayers are heard.

inlarging it, and sharpening grace and holinesse in you, in those requests you put up to *God*, in this case, build upon it, for you may be sure your praiers are heard from that ground wee even now gave you, *Hee knowes the meaning of the spirit*. So much shall serve for those Cases of Conscience in this spirituall duty of calling upon *God*.

Qualifications or conditions required in that prayer that shall bee accepted.

Now the last thing wee propounded was this: What the qualification is that is required in our prayers: for since we have sayd so much of prayer, it is a necessary thing that wee know what conditions are required, that it may bee acceptable.

Caution 1. That the person be right. *Iames* 5. 16.

And the first (we will commend to you, which is the ground, and first in order before all the rest) is, that *the person be right*, *The prayer of the righteous doth prevaile much*, *Iames* 5. 16.

1 Because a man must have Christ, before he have any thing else.

The ground of it is this, a man must first have Christ before he can have any thing else, *He hath given us all things else with Christ*: If wee have all things else, if we have not him, it is nothing: *All his promises* (you know) *are yea and Amen*, but it is in *him*; so that we must first have him.

2 The generall Covenant is before the particular.

And besides, the generall Covenant must goe before the particular, for the ground of all prayer is this or that particular promise, but you must first be within the Covenant, you must first have the generall Covenant belonging to you, before you can have the particular branches of it, & therefore a man must be within the covenant, his person must be first righteous, before he be accepted: & therefore let none deceive himself in this case, to thinke

thinke thus with himselfe, he hopes his heart is sincere, and his prayers right, and his ends are good; for though all this were true, yet if his person be not right, GOD regards it not. You know the blood of a sheepe, and the blood of a Swine, they are both alike, it may bee the blood of the Swine is better than the other, yet the blood of the Swine was not to be offered, because it was the blood of a Swine. So in this case, the prayer of an unregenerate man may be as well framed, for the petitions, for every thing that is required immediately to a prayer, but the heart from whence it comes, the person, from whence it proceeds, that is it that makes the difference: let this therefore be chiefly observed, that the person be right. And therefore you shall finde *Psal.* 4. 3. *David* makes that the ground, why his prayers should be heard: saith he, *Bee yee sure that God hath chosen for himselfe the godly man: And when I call upon him I shall be heard.* For that is the ground that hee takes to himselfe, why he shall be heard, because *God* hath chosen to himselfe the godly man. As if he should say, I am of the number of the godly, and therefore you that are mine enemies, and think to prevaile against me, I feare you not, for I pray to a *God* that will defend me; I am a godly man, and upon that ground I beleeve that my prayer is heard. *Beloved*, otherwise though wee pray, and pray hard, yet our sinnes cry lowder than our prayers, they cry downe our prayers, they make a greater noise than they; for the noyse that our sinnes make is like the noyse of a Thunder,

Simile.

An unregenerate man may frame a prayer as well as a holy man.

Psal. 4. 3.

Our sins outcry our praiers till our persons be right.

Simile.

when the noise of our praiers is but like the crackling of thornes, which cannot bee heard for the noise that sinne makes in the eares of the *Lord*. Thus it is, in this case, when wee come before *God* in our sins, when a man comes into his presence in his unregeneracy.

2 Remove particular sinnes.

But this is not all, for certaine it is, a man that is within the Covenant, may have a particular sinne, (as you heard heretofore) that may intercept his praiers, and that may hinder the blessing: so that, that sinne must be removed, before his prayers can bee heard. It is true, *The Sonne abides in the house for ever*, but yet the Sonne may commit such an offence, that his father may use him as a servant, hee may deny his requests, and refuse them, when hee comes to seeke any thing at his hands: And therefore, there must bee a particular reconciliation, a particular repentance, that sinne must be removed, and done away, that stands in the way. This was the method the Saints alwaies have kept in calling upon *God*: See it in *Daniel*, and *Ezra*, all of them, for the most part, when they make any compleat praier, wee see, still they begin with humiliation, and confession of sinnes. And the reason of it is, that their persons might bee cleere and innocent, that those sinnes might be removed, which would stand in their way; and this likewise is a ground of that, 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. Why the Saints begin their prayers with humiliation.

1 *Tim.* 2. 8. sayth the Apostle there, *I will, that prayers bee made in all places, that you lift up pure hands without wrath and doubting*: The meaning is this, not onely that a man bee within the Covenant, but

that

that he be cleanſed from all particular ſins, that might cleave to him, and hang upon him. As for example, when thou wouldeſt be accepted of *God*, if there doe any particular ſin hang on thee, that muſt bee removed by renewing thy repentance. And beſides that, ſee what the Scripture takes notice of, when a man comes to pray, his heart muſt bee cleanſed from pride (for *God reſiſts the proud*) his heart muſt be brought to an humble diſpoſition; likewiſe it muſt be cleanſed from wrath, hee muſt *lift up pure hands without wrath*; which is oft required; *Mat.* 5. *Leave thine offering, and goe and make peace with thy brother*. So likewiſe from unthankefulneſſe; our prayers are not accepted, except we be thankefull for mercies received. The like wee may ſay of every particular ſinne; wee muſt be careſull to cleanſe our ſelves from all ſinfull luſts, and corrupt affections, that they have not dominion in our hearts; but that we lift up pure hearts, and innocent hands. And this is the firſt thing that is required, that the perſon be right; that is, not onely that hee bee within the Covenant, but likewiſe that thoſe particular ſinnes be removed, that may bee an impediment to his prayers.

When we pray we muſt cleanſe our hearts.

1 From pride.

2 From wrath. *Mat.* 5. 23. 24.

3 From unthankfulneſſe.

The ſecond thing required is *Faith*; *Lift up pure hands without wrath and doubting*. You know that in *James*, *Let him that wanteth wiſedome aſke of God, let him aſke in faith and waver not*. So that though prayer be the key to open *Gods* treaſures, yet faith is the hand that turnes the key, without which it will doe no good.

2 Requiſite or condition is faith. *James* 1. 5, 6.

Simile.

Now

Why the Lord requires faith in prayer.

1

2

Now the *Lord* requires faith, partly, for his owne ſake, hee ſhould not otherwiſe be acknowledged, if you did not truſt him, when you come to ſeeke him, if you did not reſt upon him. Beſides he ſhould loſe his glory; for in this we glorifie him when we truſt him, and wee diſhonour him when we diſtruſt him; when wee come and ſeeke to him, and doe not reſt upon him, wee diſhonour him.

3

Iames 1. 6.

Beſides, in regard of us he requires faith, and will not heare us without it; becauſe, as it is *Iames* 1. 6. in the ſame place, where faith is required, there is good reaſon why it is required; for ſaith the Apoſtle there, *He that beleeves not, or hee that wavers, hee is like a wave of the Sea:* that is, ſometimes in his prayer hee is very earneſt, as a wave that ſwels high; ſometimes againe hee will be nothing at all: yea, ſaith the Apoſtle, he is not only uneven in the buſineſſe of prayer, ſometimes earneſt and forward, and ſometimes giving over again, off and on, but ſuch a man is unſtable in all his wayes; for he that truſts in *God*, will be carefull, not in prayer only, but to keep all his wayes right; but he that truſts him not, wavers in every thing: he is (it may be) diligent in prayer, he will looke to his wayes for a time, but he reſts not upon *God*, hee reſts upon other things; *Hee is like a wave*, he is not conſtant: and therefore faith is required. Now when I ſay faith is required, know this, that there is a double faith required.

A two fold faith required in our prayers.

The one is a faith in the *providence of God*, the other is a faith in his *promiſe*.

First,

First, I say, faith in *Gods providence* (which is a thing of much moment, and we are apt to forget it.) We see it cleerely, *Psal.* 146. *Blessed is he that trusts in the God of Iacob, &c. who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, who keepes covenant, and mercy for ever*: you see faith there required in the providence, *He made heaven and earth, the sea*, hee is such a *God*, who is able to bring great things to passe; for he made heaven and earth: and is he notable to doe any thing besides?

Faith in Gods providence. *Psal.* 146. 5, 6.

Secondly, there must be a faith in his *promises*, which is expressed in the next words, *He keepeth Covenant for ever*. So likewise to expresse the defect of it: You see when *Martha* and *Mary* came to *Christ* to raise *Lazarus*, they beleeved he was ready enough to doe it (there was faith in his willingnesse) but they wanted faith in his providence; for *Martha* comes to him, and tells him, *Lord*, sayth she, *Hee hath beene in the grave foure dayes*; as if she had sayd, surely now it cannot be done, if thou hadst come sooner, it might have bin brought to passe: so she beleeved him to bee willing, but there wanted faith in the providence.

2 Faith in the promises.

Againe, as here faith in the providence was wanting, so wee see, in the Leper, there was faith in the providence (it may bee, the other was wanting, but that is not expressed, 'tis more probable hee had both) *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole*: Here was an evidence of faith in the providence, hee acknowledgeth his power, *if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole*: but because *Christ* will fulfill his desire, *It is likely* hee hath faith

faith in the promise too; so, I say, there must be a faith, first, in the providence; secondly, there must bee a faith also in the promise of *God*: you have ground enough for that, you have his sure word for it, hee hath sayd, *Aske and you shall have, seeke and yee shall finde, knocke and it shall be opened to you; and whatsoever you aske, if it bee according to his will, it shall be done to you.* So that is the thing wee are chiefly to looke unto, to consider this faith in *Gods* promise; for men are ready to say, I doubt not but *God* is able, but all the question is, whether he bee willing or no. And therefore, if we will have our prayers strong, and prevalent, we must bee carefull to strengthen our faith in his promise: for, as that is strong, so our prayers doe more prevaile with *God*. It is a matter of much moment, and therefore we will shew briefly how your faith may be strengthened, and likewise how you may know it.

Mat.7.7.

We doubt of Gods willingnes more than of his power to grant our requests.

How faith may be strengthned in prayer. From Gods Attributes, which are of two sorts. 1 Absolute.

First, you shall strengthen your faith, if you consider the *nature* of God. *Beloved*, this is a great cause why wee beleeve not the promise of *God*, and his readinesse to helpe us in difficult cases, because wee are ignorant of the Nature of *God*, of the Attributes of *God*; or at least, we doe not consider them. For example, (that I may open it to you a little, and shew you the way of making use of the Attributes of *God*, in calling upon him, & strengthening our faith from them) consider first, the *Iustice* of *God*, (I will give you examples, how the Saints have still strengthned their faith frō *Gods* Attributes) *David* useth this

1 *Iustice.*

Argu-

Argument; *Lord, thou art Iust, I am Innocent:* When hee telleth *God* of his Iustice, and withall expresseth his owne Innocencie, it is a strong Argument. *David*, you see, useth it oft, (I need not to name particulars) *Lord, reward me according to mine Innocencie, &c. Thou knowest I am righteous*, and mine enemies have done me thus and thus much wrong, and *thou art just*: *God* cannot deny this; for it is a strong Argument, that is taken from such an Attribute.

So againe, the *Goodnesse of God*: *Lord, thou art full of Mercie*; on the other side, *I am full of Miserie*: And when these are put together, it is a great meanes to strengthen our faith. And therefore, wee see, *David* often expresseth his owne calamitie, his disease, how hee was oppressed by enemies, and slandered, &c. and *Gods* Mercie, (that is the ground of it) *God is full of compassion*: As if he should say; Thou art full of goodnesse, and I am in calamity, and miserie, at this time: and that was an Argument whereby hee strengthened his faith. 2 Mercy.

So againe, another Attribute of God is, his *Glory*: when we make the Argument thus; *Lord*, Thou hast an eye to thy Glory, and I aime at thy Glory: in such a request, it is a strong prevailing Argument with him. You know, *Moses* prevailed with him, when he sought the saving of the whole people of *Israel*: *Lord* (saith he) *thy Name will be polluted, what will the Heathen say?* And since I aime at thy Glory in it, deny me not. And likewise *Ezekias*, and *David*, they use the same Argument 3 Glory.

gument to *God*; *shall the dust praise thee?* Shall any Glory be given to thee in the grave? shall wee be able to doe any thing for thy honor, when we are dead? So that the Arguments that are taken from *Gods* Glory, and our aime at his Glory, is another meanes to strengthen our faith.

4 Power. Moreover, the *Power* of GOD, that is another Attribute; whereby we may conceive the same Argument, (as I said before) when wee goe to *God*, and expresse our weakenesse, and his Power: LORD we are weake, we are able to doe nothing; *Lord*, thou art Almighty, thou mad'st Heaven and Earth; it is a strong Argument to prevaile with him. So, we see, *Asa* prevailed with *God*, 2. *Chron.* 14. *Oh Lord* (saith he) *it is all one with thee to helpe with many, or few, and we rest upon thee.* As if hee should say: Wee are exceeding few, wee are exceeding weake, wee are able to doe nothing; but thou art able to do it with a few, as well as with a great multitude: there hee puts them together. 2 Chron. 14. 11. And the like wee have of *Iehosaphat: Lord we have no strength to stand before our enemies, but our eyes are to thee.* As if he should say; Thou hast strength & power enough, thou art able to doe it though we are unable. This is another Argument taken from the Power of *God*. 2 Chron. 20. 12.

5 Vnchangeablenesse. Againe, the *Vnchangeablenesse* of *God*. When one comes to the LORD, and shall say to him: *Lord*, thou hast done thus and thus in former times for thy servants; *Lord*, thou hast done thus and thus for me, in another case; and thou art unchangeable, thou art the same *God*: this is a great meanes

meanes to ſtrengthen our faith. As you know, it is in your Law-ſuits, when you have a preſident, it addes ſtrength to the cauſe, ſo when wee have preſidents for this, it will adde ſtrength to us, & that ſtrength is taken from *Gods* unchangeableneſſe: if wee put them together, *Lord*, thou art unchangeable, *Lord*, thou haſt done it to other men in the like caſe; thou haſt done it to me alſo in the like caſe: It is a ſtrong Argument, and an Argument that *David* uſeth; you ſee how hee is ſtayed up by it, *Pſal.* 22. 4. *Lord, our fathers truſted in thee, and were delivered, they truſted in thee, and were not confounded.* As if hee ſhould ſay; *Lord*, thou art unchangeable, thou heardeſt them in the ſame caſe when they truſted in thee; now, it is my caſe, and therfore I beſeech thee to helpe mee in my diſtreſſe. *Simile.* *Pſal.* 22. 4.

Againe, the *faithfulneſſe* of *God*, the fidelity of *God*; that is another of his Attributes: and when wee make our Argument thus, *Lord*, thou art faithfull, and I truſt in thee; it is a ſtrong Argument, for you know, it is an Argument that prevailes much with men; a man is ready to ſay, hee truſts me, I muſt not deceive him: Much more the LORD keepes Covenant, and Mercy for ever. When wee come, and uſe this to him, *Lord*, thou art faithfull, thou haſt ſaid, thou wilt keepe Covenant and Mercy for ever, thou canſt not doe otherwiſe, it is thy nature, thou canſt not deny thy ſelfe, and I reſt on thee, I depend on thee; in ſuch a caſe, it cannot bee the *Lord* ſhould faile us: If a man will not faile one that truſts in him; certainly 6 Faithfulneſſe.

certainely the *Lord* will not: and that is an Argument that is used oft, Thou never failest them that trust thee.

a Relative.

Then, besides the absolute Attributes of *God*, consider his relative Attributes; he is a *Father*, and a *Master*: It is a strong Argument that is taken from these. If wee goe to the *Lord*, and say, *Lord*, thou art a Father, thou art a Master, thou art an Husband; Whither should the Children go, but to their Father? Whither should the Wife goe, but to her Husband? Whither should the Servants goe, but to their Master, to their *Lord*? *Lord*, thou hast commanded us to provide for our own, and, *He is worse than an Infidel, that provides not for his owne*: *Lord*, wee belong to thee, wee are thine. Wee see, *David* useth this Argument, That *God had made him*. You have it oft in the *Psalmes*, That GOD had made him, not onely his Creature, but had made him againe, hee was his Servant; *I am thy Servant*: Hee useth oft this Relative, That GOD was *his* GOD, and that hee was GOD'S *servant*, one that did belong to him, and that did depend upon him. And surely (my Beloved) dependance, and seeking to *God*, is a great meanes to win him to us. When wee see another depend upon us; and lookes after no body else, that is an effectuall motive with men: the same is as prevalent with GOD; and therefore may strengthen our faith. Now, when I say these Arguments prevaile with GOD, the meaning is indeed, that they prevaile with us, they strengthen our faith, they enable us to beleeve, that GOD is ready to helpe

Arguments in prayer strengthen our faith.

helpe us, and when wee beleeve it, and truſt upon him, then indeed God is ready to ſecond it; becauſe then wee are prepared, wee can then put up our deſires in the prayer of faith; otherwiſe they are put up with doubting, and that makes them unacceptable to God, and uneffectuall. And, now as I have ſhewed you the way, ſo likewiſe in a word, we will ſhew you when we doe pray in faith (for that is a thing that is very uſeful) you ſhal know it by this (for I adde that, becauſe I ſee the Scripture requires it, as ſuch a maine condition, without which a man cannot be accepted, *Be it done to thee according to thy faith*; it is every where inculcated) you ſhall know it, I ſay, by the quietneſſe of your mind, and your ſecurity. When a man calls upon God, and his mind is quiet in it, it is a ſigne that he beleeves, and truſts in him, it is a praier of faith. *Hannah*, you know, in that caſe, *looked no more ſad*, becauſe ſhe truſted in *God*, ſhee beleeved the thing ſhould be done and reſted therein: and therefore if you finde ſolicitude and perplexity in your mind, it is a ſigne that your praiers want ſo much faith; for if you did reſt upon *God*, you would be quiet, and ſecure in him.

How we may know that we pray in faith.

1 By the quietneſſe of the mind after.

Secondly, if you doe beleeve, you will continue in prayer. You know, it was an argument of the faith of the woman of *Canaan*, that ſhe continued, that ſhe would take no deniall; though the *Lord* did not grant her requeſt, but put her off, yet ſhe held out: & what was the reaſō of it? becauſe ſhe beleevd that he was the ſon of *David*, that he

2 By continuance in praier.

was mercifull, and that hee would heare in the end. So that continuance in prayer is an argument we doe beleeve the *Lord*. As a man that beleeves ſuch a man is within the houſe whom he

Simile.

deſires to ſpeake with, is content to wait long for him: Or he, that hath a ſuit, and knowes that he ſhall have an end of it at ſuch a time, hee will never give over till it bee effected: So it is in this caſe, if we beleeve, we will be content to wait, *He that beleeves will not make haſte*,

Eſay.28.

becauſe hee truſts in GOD, and depends upon him.

3 Diligence in the uſe of the meanes.

Laſtly, a diligent uſe of thoſe meanes that *God* hath preſcribed, and no other, is a great argument that our prayer is with faith. And thus we have ſhewed you the two things that are required in prayer; firſt, that the perſon muſt be righteous, and within the Covenant; ſecondly, that there muſt bee a beleeving in *God*: as alſo how this faith is wrought, both in his providence, and in his promiſes; and likewiſe how we ſhall know, whether our prayers be the prayers of faith, or no.

FINIS.

THE

THE FIFTH SERMON.

1 Thess. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

THE next condition required in prayer is *fervency*; you know the place, *The prayer of the righteous availeth much, if it bee fervent.* The *Lord* requires this qualification in prayer, because it puts the heart into a holy and spirituall disposition: for it is not simply the making of the request, that *God* lookes for at our hands, but such a working upon our hearts by prayer, such a bringing of them to a good frame of grace, by that duty, that thereby we are more

3 Condition required in prayer is fervency. *Iames. 5. 16.*

What God requires in prayer.

fitted to receive the mercy, that before we were not. When a man is fervent in prayer, it sets all the wheeles of his soul the right way, it puts the heart into a holy and spirituall disposition and temper; so that the *Lord* sees it now fit to bestow mercy upon such a man, that before was unfit, by reason of his untowardnesse, and stubbornnes of heart, by reason of that uncleane and unholy disposition, that he saw in him. And therefore hee will have praier fervent; not so much because the very fervency of prayer it selfe is respected, but because by vertue of that fervency the heart is made better: when a man comes to *God* with a request, like the request of the patiēt to the Physician, it may be the Physician denies long, when the Patient askes things that are pleasant and agreeable to him, not because he is unwilling to give thē, but because his body must be brought into another temper, he must take a vomit, or a purge, which perhaps is grievous to the Patient; but this must be done before he be fit to receive such cordials: so the *Lord* deales with his servants; though he be willing to bestow such mercies on them, yet, because they are not fitted, he requires continuance in prayer, and fervency in it. Therefore, we say, in prayer all the graces of *Gods* Spirit are set on worke, & the more fervent the prayer is, the more they are intended, the more they are acted, the more they are increased; and therefore the *Lord* is moved by this fervency, to bestow a mercy on us, that otherwise hee would not doe.

Why God requires fervency.

Simile.

But

But now all the question is, what this fervencie is.

Quest.

You shall find it usually expressed in the Scriptures by such metaphors as these, *Crying to the Lord, wrestling with the Lord, striving with him,* and *giving him no rest*: wherein these two things are to be marked:

Answ. When a man is said to bee fervent.

First, a man is said then to be fervent, when he puts all his strength to prayer, when hee is very earnest, and importunate with the *Lord*, when hee strives and contends with him, though he find many difficulties, and impediments, yet hee breakes through all; this is to be fervent in prayer, to be importunate with the *Lord*. For example, when a man comes to pray, hee findes many discouragements, and himselfe (perhaps) guilty of many sinnes, yea, he findes little holinesse, hee hath but feeble faith to his owne sense, and much deadnesse of spirit, yet he continues instant notwithstanding; nay, further hee doth not onely find these impediments in himselfe, but hee finds the *Lord* exceeding backward to the thing, either giving no answere, turning the deafe eare to him, or (it may be) giving a contrary answere, as to the woman of *Canaan*. But to give you a particular example; when a man comes to pray for health, it may be his sicknes increaseth upon him more, when he prayes to overcome such a lust or temptation, it may be, it is doubled upon him; when hee prayes for such a deliverance, it may be, the oppression growes more and more; as it was with the *Israelites*, when they sought for deliverance

1

When we put to all our strength notwithstanding difficulties.

Mat.15.

liverance out of Ægypt, the oppreſſion grew greater: now to hold out notwithſtanding this, and to continue in praier, and to out-wraſtle *God* in it, though he ſeeme backeward to the requeſt; this is to be fervent in prayer.

2 When we are conſtant.

Secondly, fervency is not onely loud praying, but continuall knocking, when a man is not only importunate with the *Lord*, but hee continues long, hee will not give over, till he have got the bleſſing. You know, *Iacobs* fervency was ſeene in that, that he continued all night, *He wreſtled with the Lord*. What was the reaſon that hee wreſtled? *He would not let him goe, till hee had got the bleſſing*, till he had obtained the thing he ſought for. So I ſay, this earneſtneſſe, & continuance in praier, the breaking thorow all difficulties, this is to wreſtle with the *Lord*: for all wreſtling and ſtriving (you know) ſuppoſeth ſome oppoſition on the other part. Indeed, if there were no oppoſition, it were a ſmall thing; but, I ſay, when the *Lord* is moſt backward, when the thing is moſt improbable, when there is much difficulty, ſo that you know not how it ſhould be brought to paſſe, yet if you continue ſtriving, and give the *Lord* no reſt, as though you would never give over, this is fervency in prayer, and this is a condition that the *Lord* requires: but here two Caurions muſt be remembred, that we miſtake not this fervency.

Cautions about fervency.

1 That it be a fruit of faith.

Firſt (remember) fervency, if it be right, it muſt be a fruit of faith: for there is a fervency that comes not from faith, but from a naturall ſence of want, when a man is indeed as a ſwine that

that is pinched, which you know, will cry exceeding loud, not because it lookes for help, but because it is pinched: so any other creature, or a mā naturally will use importunity, when he wants any thing, and will be earnest in his requests; such fervency the *Lord* regards not, because there is no more but a meere expression of naturall desires, there is no holinesse in it, there is no fire of the Spirit; but when this is added to it, that there is not onely a sence of the thing wee want, but also a hope of mercy, a ground to beleeve that I shall have the thing granted, and out of this ground I am earnest and importunate; now earnestnesse is a fruit of faith. When Iesus Christ lived upon earth, when men came and cryed earnestly unto him and were exceeding importunate; some to bee healed of their diseases; some to have devils cast out, &c. we see his answere was still to them, Be it to thee (how?) not according to their importunity and fervency, but according to their faith: as if hee should say, I heed not, I regard not all this clamour and earnestnesse, if they bee onely expressions of such wants, if they be onely in the sense of such need, and no more; but if they proceed from faith, and that faith set you on worke to call upon mee, *Bee it unto thee according to that*. For indeed, these two things make up fervency in prayer; *sense of need, and hope of mercy*; when a man hath faith and hope to increase his fervency, and it ariseth from that ground, as well as out of the other (not that I exclude the other, for it is a very great helpe, and

When fervency is a fruit of faith.

Whence fervency springs.

that which puts sticks on the fire (as it were) to make our fervency the more) I say, from sense of our need, when we consider seriously what want wee have, and then adde this hope, and faith, when these two shall set you on worke, this fervency is a fruit of faith. And this is one Caution that must be remembred.

Simile.

Caution 2. That it be mingled with sincerity.

Another Caution is this, that your fervency be joyned with sincerity; for a man may be fervent to obtaine such and such blessings, as hee may beg at Gods hand very earnestly, hee may aske credit, he may aske to have guidance in such a businesse, he may aske wisedome to bring such an enterprise to passe, hee may aske health, and continuance of life, but to what end? if it be that he may bestow it upon his lusts, if it be that hee may live more deliciously, that he may be some body more in the world, that hee may have outward conveniences, such as his flesh desires, if this be all, here this fervency is not regarded; not that these things are excluded, for the *Lord* gives us leave to seeke our owne comforts, and you may be earnest, and importunate, even for the comfort it selfe; but yet all these if they bee not capable of a further use, if that be not intended, but the abuse of them, and an intent to use them another way, the Lord heeds it not, it is no true fervency. And therefore in *Rom.* 12. 11. it is the exhortation of the Apostle, *Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*; when wee many times (it may bee) are fervent in spirit, serving our selves, we are fervent to aske such and such requests, out

Note.

Rom. 12. 11.

of

of ends of our owne, as when a man deſires able gifts, high gifts, to get glory, and to get wealth to himſelfe, and not to ſerve his Maſter, this is to aske the talent, not for his maſters uſe, but for his owne; doe you thinke the *Lord* will heare ſuch prayers? can you expect it at his hands? You ſhall ſee the contrary practice in the Saints; when they were earneſt with the *Lord* for any thing, ſtill they expreſſe that to him, and ſay, LORD, wee deſire not this for our ſelves, but for thy glory, that we may uſe it for ſome good purpoſe, &c. *David*, when hee was earneſt for life, when he was in ſickeneſſe, and doubted of his recovery, what argument doth he uſe? *Lord*, ſaith hee, *Shalt thou have glory in the grave?* As if hee ſhould ſay, if thou give me life, I will give it thee againe, I will improve it, and husband it to thy advantage, and not to mine owne. And ſo *Hanna*, when ſhe was earneſt for a ſonne, ſhee makes this promiſe to the *Lord*, that he ſhall be for him and his advantage, ſhe would dedicate him to his uſe, and conſecrate him to his ſervice. So *Iacob*, when hee was earneſt with the *Lord* to give him meat, drinke, and cloathes, &c. LORD, ſaith he, *If thou doe, I will give the tenth part to thee againe.* I ſay, when the heart is thus diſpoſed in our fervency, in our importunity, when wee aske any thing at the *Lords* hands, that our conſcience tels us within, that if wee had it, wee would beſtow it upon the LORD, wee would not abuſe it, wee would not ſpend it on our luſts, it ſhould not be to ſerve our ſelves, but to ſerve the LORD with-

What Arguments the Saints have uſed in their prayers.

all,

all, then our fervency is rightly ordered.

4 Condition required in prayer is humility. *Iames* 4. 2 *Chron.* 7. 14.

The next condition required, is *humility*; *as Iames* 4. *The Lord gives grace to the humble*: And 2 *Chron.* 7. 14. *If my people humble themselves, and call upon my Name, then will I heare in heaven, and grant their requests.* And throughout the Scripture you see, that this is a condition that the *Lord* puts in every where; *Hee hath a respect to the low estate, Isay* 66. 2. saith the *Lord, All these things have my hands made*, looking upon all the creatures, the whole frame of them, they are all good, and I have respect unto them; but, saith hee, I regard not all these in comparison of an humble heart, *To him will I looke that is of an humble and contrite spirit*: when the *Lord* lookes upon our prayers, if they come not from a broken heart, they want that condition that he looks for: for *he gives grace to the humble*; that is, to such a man as is little in his owne eyes, and therefore fit to be exalted, fit to receive a mercy at *Gods* hands.

Isa. 66. 2.

Reasons why humility is required in prayer.

1 God exalts such.

You know, it is a rule that the *Lord* keeps; for such as are humble and low, such he exalts; and those that exalt themselves he puls downe. Now when a man is little in his owne eyes, that parvity, that sense of his owne unworthinesse is a prevailing argument with him; and therefore *Gen* 32. *Iacob* useth that Argument, when hee comes to put up his petition, to bee delivered from *Esau*: *Lord, I am lesse then all thy mercies*; that is, take any one of thy mercies, the least, and put in one end of the balance, and put me in the other, and I am lesse than it; and lighter than it, take all the

Gen. 32.

the worth that is in me, it is not heauy enough for the leaſt mercy. Now, when hee was thus humbled, and little, and vile in his owne eyes, the *Lord* beſtowed that mercy on him, hee was now fit to receive it. So *David*, when the *Lord* ſends him word by *Nathan*, that hee would *build him a houſe for ever* (you ſee how hee expreſſed himſelfe) *Hee went into the houſe of the Lord, and ſate before him, and ſaid, Lord, what am I, and what is my fathers houſe?* As if hee ſhould ſay, I was taken out of the duſt, I was one of the meaneſt men of *Iſrael*, and a man of no account, of no worth, and yet thou haſt had reſpect unto me thus farre, not onely to make me King over thy people; but to build my Kingdome, and my houſe, to make me a conſtant houſe for ever. I ſay, this ſenſe of our owne unworthineſſe, makes us more fit to receive the mercy, to bee exalted by receiving ſuch a requeſt, as wee put up to the *Lord*; and therefore hee regards the prayer of the humble. 2 Sam. 7.18.

Moreover, *God gives grace to the humble*, that is, he ſhewes favour to them, when they come and aske any thing at his hands, becauſe an humble man will be ready to doe whatſoever hee will, it is an expreſſion of *David*, in *Acts* 13. 22. *Hee will doe whatſoever I will*: that may bee ſaid of every humble man, he is exceeding pliable to the *Lords* will, hee is ready to doe whatſoever hee knowes to bee his pleaſure, he reſiſts him in nothing. Now, when a man will do whatſoever *God* will, the *Lord* will be ready to doe whatſoever 2 God gives grace to ſuch. Acts 13.22.

ver hee will; he will be ready to ſay to him, as he did to the *Canaanite*, *Oh woman, bee it to thee as thou wilt*. When a man on the otherſide, reſiſts the LORD (as every proud man doth, ſaith the text) the *Lord* reſiſts him, the *Lord reſiſts the proud, and gives grace to the humble*. A reſiſting ſpirit cauſeth the *Lord* to reſiſt our prayers; and therefore it is, that the *Lord* is ready to the humble man, becauſe he yeelds to the *Lord* in all things; and when a man yeelds to the *Lord* (take that for a rule) in obeying *Gods* commandements, *God* will yeeld to us in granting our petitions.

Note.

3 It is an acceptable ſacrifice.

Beſides, when the heart is humbled, and broken, and contrite, it is an acceptable ſacrifice to the *Lord*, which winnes it at his hands: he ſmells a ſweet ſavour from ſuch a ſacrifice above all other; yea, it is that which ſets a high price upon every ſacrifice that wee offer; the beſt prayers, the beſt workes, that proceed not from an humble heart, he regards them not: as *Pſal.* 51. *Lord*, ſaith *David*, *if I offer ſacrifice, thou wilt not regard it*, but *the ſacrifice of a contrite, and humble ſpirit*, thoſe thou regardeſt, and thoſe ſacrifices that proceed from it. When we come to make a petition to the *Lord* (it was the manner in the old law not to come empty-handed) a proud perſon comes empty-handed, but an humble perſon comes with a ſacrifice, and the beſt ſacrifice, becauſe he ſacrificeth himſelfe, and his owne will, that is, he empties himſelfe of himſelfe, he opens a doore to the *Lord*, to come, and dwell in him, when a proud man barres him out; ſuch a ſacrifice

fice the *Lord* is well pleased with, and such a sacrifice speakes for one, it makes a way for his requests, and therefore the *Lord* hearkens to it.

Lastly, the *Lord* is ready to heare those that are humble, because whatsoever they receive, they take it as of grace, and not as debt: whereas a proud man, a man that hath a good conceit of himselfe, a man that is lift up in his owne opinion, thinkes it to be due, he thinkes there is some correspondence between his workes, & the wages. You know what is said of the *Pharisee*, that *the Publicane went away justified rather than he.* Why so? Because the *Publican* thought himselfe worthy of nothing. And therfore *Ezek.* 36. 31. when the *Lord* promiseth those great mercies to his people, he requires this condition of them, that they should *acknowledge themselves worthy to be destroyed.* When a man hath a sense of his owne unworthinesse, and so comes to the *Lord*, and askes it as of meere grace and mercy, that is a great motive to prevaile with him: for he is very carefull of that. You know in *Deut.* 8. 11. how wary the *Lord* was in giving this rule to them; *Take heed when thou commest into that good Land, thinke not to say with thy selfe, the Lord hath done this for my owne righteousnesse.* *No*, saith he, *I have not done it for that, but for my Covenant which I made with Abraham, Isaac and Iacob:* that is, for my owne name sake, for my mercies sake, for the covenant that I confirmed with them, that is, the covenant in Iesus Christ, therefore I have done it, and not for your owne righteousnes. So the you see, that this

4 They receive all as of free grace.

Luke 18.

Ezek 36 31.

Deut. 8. 11.

this is a condition the *Lord* will have obſerved in our calling upon him, that our hearts be humbled, that a man be little, and vile in his own eies, that he come with a broken, and contrite heart, pliable to him in all things, ready to obey him; when the heart is ſo diſpoſed, he *gives grace*, that is he ſhewes favour, hee is ready to grant our requeſts.

5 Condition required in prayer is, to ſanctifie the Lord in our hearts.

The next condition required in prayer, is, that wee *ſanctifie the Lord, in our hearts.* You know when *Nadab* and *Abihu* drew neere unto him with a common fire (when they ſhould have brought ſuch fire as came from heaven, holy fire) the *Lord* deſtroyed them: and hee gives this reaſon; *For I will be ſanctified in thoſe that draw neere to me.* When wee come to call upon the *Lord*, wee know, then wee come neere to him, and in ſuch drawing neere, wee muſt ſanctifie him in our hearts, that is, wee muſt conceive him to be, as he is, moſt holy. Now if the *Lord* be moſt holy, if he that is uncleane, and impure, and unholy, ſhall come neere him, he ſanctifies not the *Lord God*, (that is) he comes not to him as to a moſt holy *God*, but he lookes upon him, as if he were a common perſon. And therfore whenſoever they came to offer a ſacrifice, in the old Law, they were firſt purified; if any man were uncleane, and ſhould offer a ſacrifice, hee was to bee cut off from his people. Therefore to ſanctifie the *Lord* in our hearts, is to come with holy hearts, as in 1 *Tim.* 2.8. It is the charge that the Apoſtle gives there, *Lift up your hands without wrath or doubting*:

1 *Tim.* 2.8.

lift

lift up your hearts, and innocent hands, without wrath or doubting.

But you will ſay, what is this holineſſe? *Queſt.*

Beloved, it is nothing but *a ſequeſtring, or ſeparating any thing from a common uſe, and appropriating it to God alone*; that is holineſſe. You know, whatſoever was holy to the *Lord*, in the Temple, or otherwiſe, whether it were holy veſſels, or holy men, as the Prieſts, it was ſeparated from all other uſes, and made peculiar to him, and to his ſervice. Now the heart of a man is holy then, when it is withdrawne from all things elſe, and peculiar to the *Lord* alone. As a chaſte wife is to her husband, whoſe affections are beſtowed vpon him, and no other perſon elſe; ſo when the heart is to the *Lord* alone, when all the affections are intent vpon him, and beſtowed upon him, and upon none elſe, this is to have the heart holy to him. So that now hee that will have an eye upon credit, upon vaine-glory, upon wealth, upon his luſts, upon any thing beſides the *Lord*, whereto the heart is wedded, ſo that he beſtowes any part of that conjugal affectiō upon it, which ſhould be wholly the *Lords*, this man is an unholy man, his heart is not holy: for it is not ſequeſtred from other things, and conſecrated to him alone: for that onely is to be holy.

Anſw. Holines what.

1 The heart muſt be holy. *Simile.*

An unholy man who.

And as the heart muſt bee holy, ſo muſt the prayer be holy. When a man prayes to the *Lord* with reſpect unto him, and hath an eye upon him, and nothing elſe comes in to take away part of this prayer; if by-reſpect, and worldly, and carnall

2 The prayer muſt be holy.

carnall thoughts come in, and set you on work to pray, now these haue a portiõ & interest in your prayers, they make your prayers profane and common, they are not peculiar to the *Lord*, they are unholy. So that is the holines then in seeking the *Lord*, when wee are knit, and wedded to him, when one takes this resolution to himselfe, I am the *Lords* servant, and him will I serve, I am not the servant of man, nor of any creature, I am married to the *Lord*, and his will I be alone, I will withdraw my heart from all things else. So likewise when a man prayes, so that his soule is intent upon the *Lord*, and upon nothing besides, when the whole streame of his affections are caried to him, this is to seeke to him in holinesse, this is to sanctifie the *Lord* in our hearts.

Heb. 10. 2.

3 Particular sins must be repented of.

And lastly, if there be any conscience of sinne (that phrase I finde used in *Heb.* 10.) that is, if there be any evil conscience, if a man be conscious to himselfe of any sin that is unrepented of, such a man cannot pray, that makes him unholy: if there be any sinfull lust yet living in him, that is unmortified in him, which is not washed away, such a man is unholy: yea, my Beloved, the Saints themselves, when they sinne against *God*, as you heard heretofore, they are suspended from the Covenant; though they be within the Covenant, yet they are suspended from receiving the benefit by it, which otherwise they might have: till that sinne be washed away, they are not holy. A Priest, or one that was holy, if he touched any uncleane thing, hee remained unholy

holy, till he was waſhed, though otherwiſe hee were holy habitually, wholly dedicated to *Gods* ſervice; ſo it may be with thoſe, that are within the Covenant; though thou be a holy man, yet, if thou touch pitch, that is, if thy heart be polluted with any ſinne, of one kind or other, as long as that remaines, thou art unholy. If thou come now, and ſeeke to the *Lord*, you know what the judgement was in the old law, ſuch a one was to bee cut off from his people. And therefore, you ſhall finde, this was the conſtant practice of the Saints, when they ſought the *Lord*, for any ſpeciall mercy, they began with taking paines with their owne hearts, with humbling themſelves for their owne ſinnes, and the ſinnes of the people: as we know, *Daniel*, and *Ezra*, and *David*, did in their prayers; but I will not ſtand to enlarge my ſelfe therein, for it is well enough known to ſuch as are converſant in the Scriptures: onely let me exhort every man, when hee commeth with any requeſt and petition to the *Lord*, let him firſt examine his heart and life diligently, looke backe to all his former wayes, conſider and go through all the particulars; ſee if there bee any thing amiſſe, if there be any tincture of uncleanneſſe yet lying upon him, which is not yet waſhed away, if there be any pollution, any defilement of fleſh, or ſpirit; and let him know, that it is but labour loſt, it is a provoking of the *Lord*, to come with unpreparedneſſe to draw neere to him, except he be cleanſed.

The practice of holy men in their prayers.

But you will ſay, How ſhall wee be cleanſed? *Queſt.*

Anſw. 2 Meanes of cleanſing a mans ſelfe.

1

I anſwere, you are cleanſed by renewing your repentance, and ſprinkling the blood of Chriſt: when a man humbles himſelfe for his ſinne, and entreth into a covenant with *God*, not to returne unto it, when he makes his heart perfect, and ſincere with the *Lord* in that particular.

2

And ſecondly, when he ſhall withall beleeve, that it is forgiven through Chriſt, when hee is ſprinkled with his blood to waſh it away: though thy ſinne be great, yet this will make thee pure, now thou art waſhed; as it is in 1 *Corinth.* 6. 9. *Now you are waſhed, now you are ſanctified, now you are juſtified*: therefore let no man bee diſcouraged in this caſe: for, I confeſſe, there is nothing that gives ſuch a check to our prayers, that gives ſo many ſtabs to them (as it were) that hinders us in that duty, as the conſciouſneſſe of ſinne, when a man remembers ſuch and ſuch a ſinne he hath committed, which doth much diſcourage him, if by the blood of Ieſus Chriſt they bee not waſhed away. Though a mans face be very foule, yet you know a baſon of cleare water will waſh it cleane, and all the filth is gone; now the blood of Chriſt is more effectuall to rinſe thy conſcience, and to purge it from dead workes, to take away, both the guilt, and likewiſe the filth and ſtaine of ſin, than water is to cleanſe thy face, and therefore if thou haſt any ſinne, labour to be waſhed from it, that ſo thou maieſt come to the *Lord*, having thy heart ſprinkled from an evill conſcience, and thy body waſhed in pure water, as it is *Heb.* 10. 22. *Let us draw neere*, ſaith the Apoſtle,

1 *Cor.* 6. 9.

Conſciouſnes of ſin a great hindrance in our prayers.

Simile.

Heb. 10. 22.

poſtle, *in aſſurance of faith*; (but how?) *having our hearts ſprinkled from an evill conſcience*: as if hee ſhould ſay, otherwiſe your drawing neere will be to no purpoſe, you ſhall but provoke the *Lord* in drawing neere, except you be thus ſprinkled, and thus waſhed, and thus purifyed.

Obiect.

I, but you will ſay to me, if this be required, who ſhall be heard in his prayers? For who can ſay his heart is pure, and his hands are innocent? and if this be required, that we muſt lift up holy and pure hearts, or elſe we ſhall not be accepted; what comfort ſhall wee have in calling upon the *Lord*, at any time?

Anſw. What it is to have a pure heart.

To this I anſwere, that to have a pure heart is not to be free from ſinne, and from daily failings, (for ſo indeed none ſhould have a pure heart) but pureneſſe of heart, holineſſe of heart is, to have *our hearts ſprinkled from an evill conſcience, and to have our bodies waſhed with pure water*; (that is) to be purified before the *Lord* is nothing elſe, but to have ſuch an habituall diſpoſition, which makes a man ready to waſh himſelfe ſtill, though hee bee ſtill ſpotted with ſinne. So that this is the diſpoſition of a holy man; if a man that drawes neere to the LORD with a pure heart, though hee bee ſtill ſpotted, and polluted, and defiled, yet hee hath an habituall diſpoſition, hee hath a principle within, hee hath a new nature within, that is ſtill working out that impurity, and waſhing it away; though ſtill he be oppoſed, and aſſaulted, and tempted, and ſometimes foiled, yet ſtill he reſiſts it, and fights againſt it;

as the *Iſraelites* had a charge never to make peace with *Amalek*: ſuch a diſpoſition is in a holy man, hee never makes peace with any ſinne; though he be led captive ſometimes by it, yet hee yeelds not to that captivity. This is to have a pure heart; though his heart be defiled ſometimes, as a veſſell will be foule, yet hee waſheth, and rinſeth his heart, he never ſuffers it to continue muddy, and uncleane, and in a filthy diſpoſition, but hee hath a fountaine, a ſpring of grace within, that will worke out all impurity, as a ſpring workes out mudde; hee that thus purifies himſelfe ſtill, though the fountaine be muddy, though there bee many injections, many temptations, many luſts and ſinnes; yet if hee be purified himſelfe, that hee will ſuffer no ſinne to mingle with his heart (as it were) to reſt there, and to abide, and dwell there, to lye and continue there, ſuch a man hath a pure heart. We ſay, that is pure, that is full of it ſelfe, and will have no *heterogenea*, no other thing mingled with it, ſuch a thing is pure, as pure oyle is nothing elſe but oyle. Now hee that hath a pure heart, is not he that hath ſimply nothing elſe, that hath no ſinne mingled, that hath no droſſe mingled with his wine, but hee that ſuffers it not to reſt there; for as oyle and water, when you jumble them together (as you know) when they are ſhaken together, they mingle, yet the oyle workes out and purifies it ſelfe, it will not ſuffer it ſelfe to abide with the water: ſo a man that is regenerate, a man that is *borne of God*, hath a ſeed remaining in him, though hee do ſin,

A holy heart never makes peace with ſin.

Purity, what.

Similie.

ſin, yet, ſaith the Apoſtle, *he cannot ſinne*, that is, he doth not agree, he doth not mingle with that ſin, it hath no reſt in his heart, but he workes it out; in a paſſion when hee is ſhaken (as it were) when he is tranſported, when he is not himſelfe, there may bee a mixture, and the fountaine, and the ſpring may be made muddy, yet let him come to himſelfe, ſtill hee workes it out: and this it is to have a pure heart. So that a man, a man thus affected, may come with boldneſſe to the throne of grace, and not be diſcouraged; what though thy ſinnes be many, and very great, and often repeated? yet if thou find in thyſelfe ſuch a diſpoſition of pureneſſe and holineſſe, ſtill to clenſe thy ſelfe, though thou be ſtill polluted and defiled, I can aſſure thee, thy heart is pure, thou maieſt go with confidence to the throne of grace.

But now you will ſay this to me (for that may be objected) why? but may not any carnall man ſay as much, he ſins againſt GOD, and comes and askes mercy, he comes and cries for forgiveneſſe and ſaith he will ſinne no more, and yet he ſinnes againe the next day, and *addes drunkenneſſe to thirſt* that is, his ſinne and his repentance they run in a circle, as drunkenneſſe and thirſt? how ſhall we then diſtinguiſh betweene theſe two? that purifying diſpoſition in the Saints, and thoſe vaniſhing purpoſes that carnall men may have, who notwithſtanding never had experience of the worke of grace, of that purity of heart that wee ſpeake of? *Obiect.*

To this I anſwere briefly, you ſhall know the *Anſw.*

Difference betweene the godly and others in falling into sinne.

difference by this, a godly man, when he falls into sinne, and is defiled with it, hee washeth himselfe from day to day; you shal find alwaies this, that he gets ground of the sin, of the lust which manifests it selfe in any actuall transgression, still it looseth by it, it gathers not strength, but loseth strength: in a carnall man it is quite contrary, his sinne still increaseth, and intends the habit, and the lust growes stronger and stronger, it gets ground of him, and those good things that hee hath, they are more and more worne out, and so they grow worse and worse from day to day: and that is the property of an evill man, of unregeneracy whereſoever, it is apt to grow worse and worse, and the more falls they have, the more sinne gets ground, and the more they lose; but it is not so with an holy man, the more he falls, the more strength he gathers, he is the more holy by it, the more wary, and watchfull over his wayes, hee is the more emptied of himselfe, and drawes neerer to the LORD, and is the more inflamed with love of him, yea he is strengthened in faith, and repentance, and in every grace; so that here the rule now holds not true, that *Acts increase habits*; but the contrary, *Acts lessen the habits*, which is a paradox in Philosophy, but here it is so.

Sinne in a carnal man groweth stronger, in a godly man weaker.

Acts lessen the habites.

Quest. If you aske how this can be?

Answ. I answere, in its owne nature every act intends the habit, as well in a godly man, as another man, but it comes to passe *by accident*, as wee say, because the grace in him is stirred up, by those

How sin in a godly man is weakened by his fall.

thoſe foiles, and ſlips, thoſe fals and infirmities, to which he is ſubject; I ſay, grace is ſtirred up in him more and more, and hee receives more vigour and ſtrength thereby. As we ſay of true valour, it is encreaſed more by oppoſition; ſo it comes to paſſe, that the more the childe of *God* falls into ſinne, the more grace is intended, Satan gets leſſe ground; as *Hezekiah*, when hee fell into pride, the pride of his heart was leſſened more by it after the act, than it was at that time when he ſhewed his treaſure to the Ambaſſador of the King of *Babel*, he knew not before the pride of his heart; that ſinne, that fall, did manifeſt his corruption, which he did not ſee before: for when the heart is ſincere, when it is pure, when there is a right principle within, grace is more ſet on worke to reſiſt ſinne. So *David*, when hee had numbred the people, that made him more humble, and therefore the *Lord* ſhewed him more mercy after wards, than ever hee did before, hee ſhewed him where the Temple ſhould be built, and uſed him in that worke, whereas hee never ſhewed him ſuch mercy, and kindneſſe before: (I cannot ſtand to expreſſe particulars) ſo it is with all *Gods* children; their hearts are never better, nor in a more holy temper, in a more gracious diſpoſition feareful to offend, thē after their fals. And therefore conſider this, that thou be not deceived; but maiſt diſtinguiſh betweene this falling into ſinne, and waſhing your ſelves, and that relapſe to which evill men are ſubject; keep that for a rule, that whereſoever there is true

Valour increaſed by oppoſition.

The heart of the Godly beſt after.

grace, ſtill it ſtirres it ſelfe more and more, as it findes more reſiſtance, even as the wind and the water, and the fire doth; you know, the water when it findes a ſtop, it growes more violent, and ſo alſo the winde; of the ſame nature is grace, where it findes a ſtop, or reſiſtance, it growes more ſtrong, and intent. The heathen had a little glimpſe of this truth, when they ſaid of vertue, that it growes more freſh and vigorous by being wounded; it is true of grace and holineſſe, the trueſt vertue, the more it is oppoſed, the more it growes: even as you ſee in oppoſition in the diſputes of Schollars, and all kind of contentions in law, or any thing elſe, the ſtronger the objection is, where there is ability in the party, it produceth new motions, and new anſwers, and puts them more to it; ſo theſe aſſaults and temptations, when there is truth of heart within, it drawes out more holineſſe to *God*, and more ſtrength, it multiplies the grace of *God* within: ſo that the graces receive increaſe, and the more they are exerciſed, and intended, ſinnefull luſts decreaſe, the minde is more emptied forth, the chaffe that is in us, and the droſſe is more winnowed out, and the heart is more clenſed from it. So much ſhall ſerve for this, that whoſoever will come to the *Lord* in prayer, muſt ſanctifie him in his heart, that is, he muſt come with a holy and with a pure heart. Wherewithall we have ſhewed what this holineſſe and pureneſſe is, wherein it conſiſts, and likewiſe how the objection is anſwered, that might deceive us.

Note.

Simile.

Vertue gets ſtrength by wounds.

Simile.

I must add another, you shall finde in *Phil.* 4. 6. whensoever you come to make your requests to the *Lord*, this is another condition that he requires, to bee *thankefull* for the mercies you have received already: *In all things*, saith hee, *let your requests bee made knowne to the Lord, with thankesgiving*: as if hee should say, Take heed of this, that whensoever you come to put up any petition to the *Lord*, you forget not the duty of thankfulnesse, but still when you come to aske any thing that you want, remember that you give thankes for that you have. Beloved, this condition must not be omitted; you see the *Lord* himselfe puts it in very carefully, *Let your requests bee made knowne with prayer, and supplication, and with thankesgiving*. There is much reason why our petitions and requests should bee accompanied with thankesgiving to the *Lord*: for is it not reason when you come to aske somewhat for your selves, that you should doe that also that is acceptable to *God*? will a man serve himselfe altogether to come meerely to aske the thing hee wants? This a man may doe out of love to himselfe, out of respect to himselfe, but you must remember to doe something that is pleasing and acceptable to the *Lord*. And therefore you shall finde in the old Law, whensoever they had any speciall request to the *Lord*, they were commanded still to come with *peace offrings*, that is, Offerings, wherein they expressed thankfulnes, you shal find this custome set down in *Levit.* & other places, that such a man as came to request any thing

6 Condition required in prayer, is Thankfulnes. *Phil.* 4. 6.

Note.

thing at the *Lords* hands, might not come *empty-handed*: and what ſhould be bring with him? a peace offering: what was that? thankefulneſſe for that peace hee had injoyed, that was a peace offering. For *peace* is a generall word, comprehending all kinde of mercies, for what is our health, but the peace of our humours within? what is our cheerefulneſſe and joy, but the peace of conſcience within? all the comfort we have in our name and ſtate, it is peace in the particular, &c. So I ſay, whenſoever thou commeſt with a petition; forget not to come with a peace offering, that is, forget not to come with thankeſgiving to the *Lord*, for that which thou haſt received; doe ſomewhat that is acceptable to him as well as ſeeke for that which is uſefull for thy ſelfe. Beloved, there is much reaſon for it; becauſe, if a man be poring on his wants ſtill, if it be in his mind when he comes to call upon *God*, it wil indiſpoſe him for ſpirituall performance, it will beget murmuring, and ſowreneſſe, & diſcontent, it will imbitter his ſpirit; but when as a man remembers many mercies that he hath received, when he makes a catalogue of them, and enumerates them, it ſweetens his ſpirit, it makes him more gracious, it acts thoſe graces that are in him, it drawes him neerer to the *Lord*, it quickens him, it makes him more contented with his condition that he is in: whereas, on the other ſide, forgetfullneſſe of mercies, when a man is onely intent upon his petition to have the thing done, hee breaks many times into that ſullenneſſe of diſpo-

All mercies reduced to peace.

If wee looke onely on our wants, we cannot be thankfull.

diſpoſition, that we find in children, that when they cannot have all that they would, they throw away that which they have; in like manner it is our fault many times, when we come and ſeeke to the *Lord* for any thing that we have need, wee are ſo intent upon it, that we forget al the mercies we have received, as if they were nothing: the *Lord* would not have it ſo, but will have us remember what wee receive, that wee may bee content to want, that our hearts may bee brought to patience and contentment, under the croſſe, and to want what it ſhall pleaſe him for a time to deny us, as *Iob* reaſoneth, ſaith he, *I have received good, from the Lords hands* (it is his anſwere to his wife) *and ſhall I not receive ill?* So, if a good man bee thankefull for mercies, it will make him ready to doe ſo, it will make him content with that preſent want: for hee lookes to that which hee hath had in hand. When a man ſaith thus with himſelfe, thus, and thus much good I have received at the *Lords* hands; what though I want ſuch a thing? what though I be preſt with ſuch an affliction, and calamity? I will be content to beare it: I ſay, the *Lord* lookes for this; expoſtulating with him and murmuring againſt him, is not acceptable to him, but a meeke manner of asking things at his hands, when a man ſo askes, that withall he is content to bee denied, if his good pleaſure be ſo, this he accepts. Now, thankfulnes for mercy, makes us ready to be ſo affected, to be willing to be denied, to be content to reſigne our ſelves to the *Lord*, and therefore hee will have thanke-

Simile.

The ſight of ſome good received will makes us content to want.

thankefullneſſe to goe with it, whenſoever wee come to aske any thing at his hands. Looke to it then, that whenſoever you come to ſeeke the *Lord*, you be thankefull for the mercies you have had, remember them, for it is a great meanes to prevaile in our requeſts. Thankfullneſſe is (as it were) the incenſe that perfumes your petitions, that makes them acceptable, and prevalent with the *Lord*, ſo much the ſooner: Prayer goes up without incenſe, when wee offer up our petitions without thankfulneſſe, becauſe that is a ſacrifice, as you know it is called the *calves of our lippes*, and ever when you joyne thankefulneſſe with your petitions, it is like a ſacrifice mingled with it, that helps to prevaile with you.

7. Condition required in prayer, is to come in the name of the Lord Ieſus Chriſt. *Iames* 4.

The next condition is, and it muſt not be forgotten of all the reſt, that wee come to the *Lord*, *in the name of Ieſus Chriſt*. This is a thing commonly knowne, you will ſay, who knowes not that except wee come in the name of *Chriſt*, no petition can be acceptable? Beloved, I ſay to you in that caſe, as the Apoſtle *Iames* ſpeakes, *Iam.* 4. where hee gives this rule, that wee ſhould ſay, *If the Lord will, wee will doe ſuch and ſuch a thing to morrow, &c.* And when the anſwere would bee ready, Who knowes not this, ſaith hee, *if you know the will of the* LORD, *and doe it not, your judgement ſhall be greater*; ſo I ſay, if any doe not practiſe this (and it is a thing wee are exceeding ready to forget, or wee are ready to doe it in a formall, and in a cuſtomary manner, but to doe it in good earneſt, as wee ought to doe it, therein

therein commonly wee come ſhort) you know how great a ſinne it was, in the old law, to offer without a Prieſt; in the 17. of *Leviticus* it is ſaid, if any man brought his ſacrifice, though it were the beſt Sacrifice and the choiceſt, yet, ſaith the Text, *If hee did not bring it to the Prieſt, and to the Altar, but ſlay his ſacrifice elſe-where, without a Prieſt, ſuch a man was guilty of blood, and was to bee cut off from his people:* that is, hee was to bee cut off by the Prieſt, by excommunication, and after by the civill Magiſtrate. You know, it was *Vzziahs* fault to offer incenſe, when it was proper to the Prieſt onely to doe it. The ſame ſinne wee commit when wee come to the *Lord*, and thinke, becauſe wee have repented, and prayed fervently a little while, and our hearts and ſpirits are in a good diſpoſition, and becauſe wee know no ſinne of which wee are conſcious, therefore wee conclude that wee ſhall be heard. It is true, the *Lord* requires theſe qualifications in the party, when hee prayes; but take heed of thinking to bee heard for this, this is to offer without a Prieſt. You muſt come thus to the LORD, and ſay thus unto him, LORD, I confeſſe (notwithſtanding all this) I am unworthy, I have nothing in mee, why thou ſhouldeſt regard me, it cannot bee, that either I, or my prayers ſhould be acceptable, but I beſeech thee, take them at the hands of CHRIST our *High Prieſt*, hee that is *entred into the vaile*, he that takes the *Prayers of the Saints, and mingles them with ſweet odours*; when a man can really doe

Levit. 17.

How we ought to come to God.

doe this, with dependance upon Chriſt, and come boldly in his name, that is to offer a ſacrifice to him. This wee muſt carefully remember, and therefore wee ſee an excellent expreſſion of it in *Levit.* 5. where this is made cleare to you, that it is not any excellency in the perſon, nor any fervency in the prayer, nor any pureneſſe, or holineſſe that is found in him, nothing that comes from man, that cauſeth his prayer to bee acceptable, but it is the Prieſt: See the place from *verſ.* 8. to the 11. You ſhall finde there the law was, that he that came to ſacrifice, *muſt bring a ſheepe or a ſhee goate*; but if hee were not ſo rich as to doe ſo, he was able enough to bring *two Turtle Doves*, yet if he were not able to doe that, then ſaith the Text, *Hee ſhall bring the tenth part of an Ephah of fine flower* (a very ſmall thing) and then it is ſaid, *Let him give it to the Prieſt, and hee ſhall make an atonement for him, and his ſinne ſhall bee forgiven.* Whence I obſerve this, that it is not the goodneſſe of the ſacrifice, the price, nor the choiſneſſe nor the excellency of that, though it were a thouſand Rammes, and ſo many Sheepe, and Bullocks (as you reade of many great ſacrifices that were offered by the Kings) yet the tenth part of an Epha of fine Flowre, which was exceeding little, this prevailed full as much: whence it is evident, that it is not in the excellency of the ſacrifice, but the pooreſt, and the ſmalleſt, and the meaneſt ſacrifice will prevaile with *God*, as well as the richeſt, and the greateſt. What is the reaſon? The text ſaith, It is the *Prieſt* that muſt offer it,

Levit. 5.

Our prayers are not heard for any excellency in them, but for Chriſt.

it, he makes it acceptable. So in this case, let the sacrifice be never so meane, yet if it bee Christ that offers the sacrifice, if it be commended to the Priest, and he offers it, the *Lord* will accept it. You shall find that rule, *Lev.* 5. 11. *He that brings a sacrifice* (this caution was given) *he must put no incense to it, neither oyle.* But should the sacrifice be offered without incense? No you shall find in *Levit.* 16. that alwayes, *the Priest*, when he entred into the *Holy of Holiest*, hee *burnt incense, that the cloud of that incense might cover the Mercy-seate*: the meaning is this, that when any man comes to offer a prayer to the *Lord*, hee can put no incense to it, the Priest only he must put in incense, that is IESVS CHRIST onely must suffer the sacrifice, wherein the *Lord* smells a savour of rest: for the *Lord* expresseth himselfe in this manner, as if he were disquieted for sin, and can take no rest; now, when *Iesus Christ* offers a sacrifice, hee smells a savour of rest; because it comes from him, in whom hee is well pleased: so I say, wee must be carefull that we remember we come in the name of *Christ*.

Levit. 5. 11.

Levit. 16. 11. Christ must put incense to our prayers.

Object:

But, you will say, every man doth so, and how shall we know it?

Answ. How to know when we come in our owne names in prayer.

You shall know it by this, if you have boldnesse and confidence, that is an argument that you looke not upon your selves, but upon *Christ*. When a man is so exceeding timerous, and doubting, and fearefull, that he dares not come to the throne of grace, or, if hee doe, yet hee makes a great question, whether he shalbe heard

or

What required in the heart that comes to God in Chriſts Name.

or no, this is too much looking to himſelfe, here the High Prieſt is forgotten. If thou come in his name, there is enough to carry thee out, it will breed boldneſſe in thee, it will breed confidence: if thou come in the name of Chriſt, and offer up thy prayers through him, it will cauſe thee, in every petition thou putteſt up, to thinke thy ſelfe ſo much beholding to Chriſt, that thou wilt be ready to ſay in thy heart, whenſoever any petition is granted thee, I may thanke Ieſus Chriſt for this. When a man, I ſay, ſhall be ſo much put upon his ſcore, it will make him ſo much indebted to the Lord Ieſus for his ſin that is remitted, and his petition that he hath granted, as that his heart ſhall bee more enlarged to thankefullneſſe, when hee is able to conſider the benefit of redemption, and is ready to ſay with himſelfe, If Ieſus Chriſt had not dyed, if I had not had ſuch an high Prieſt, that hath entred into the very heavens, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Heb. 9. To make interceſſion for mee*, I had loſt this benefit, I had never come to have put up a prayer to the *Lord*, or if I had, it ſhould not have beene heard.

Heb. 9.

Object.

But you will ſay to mee, if wee bee heard for Chriſt, then though a man be ſinfull, and though he have none of the precedent conditions, though he have not that holineſſe that is required, if the Prieſt make him acceptable, why may hee not hope as well as the moſt holy man?

Anſw. Two things required in our ſacrifice.

I anſwere, briefly, though the Prieſt give all acceptance to the ſacrifice, and our prayers are accepted through him, yet that is not all, there are

are two things beſides required, 1. That the perſon that brings the ſacrifice, be cleane; no impure perſon was to bring a ſacrifice: 2. That the ſacrifice be without blemiſh; he that hath a male, and brings a female, is curſed: ſo then this is required, that the perſon be righteous, and that the prayer be fervent, ſuch as is indited by the helpe of *Gods* Spirit, that it may be a ſacrifice fit for the *Lord*. But now, what wee have from CHRIST is this, that though the perſon, and the prayer bee thus qualified, and have thoſe fore-noted conditions in it, yet it is not acceptable without the Prieſt. And therefore this ſhould encourage you when you conſider the glorious GOD, his holineſſe, that great diſtance betweene him and you; and your ſelves on the other ſide, how vile and ſinfull you are, & unfit to come and put up your requeſts to him, now, when you thinke of a Mediator, of an high Prieſt, who is entred into heaven, who is gone thither, and ſits at the right hand of Majeſty, making interceſſion for you, when you conſider there is one high Prieſt who is able to prevaile, not like the Prieſts in the Law, but one that is over the houſe of *God*, one that is his very Son, who is not entred in through the blood of Bulls and Goats, but with his owne blood; when out of this you ſhall receive confidence, & come neere him with boldneſſe, this is to make uſe of *Chriſt*, and to offer ſacrifice in him. There is no more remaining now, but that when you have conſidered all the conditions mentioned, & fitted your prayers according to them, that you

The perſon muſt be holy and the prayer fervent.

How to make uſe of *Chriſt* as our Prieſt.

be confident, and expect much, that when you have prayed, you may say thus; *Lord*, I expect now the granting of them, thou canst not now denie them, *Lord*, I will wait now. And this is our fault, when we have prayed, and the thing comes not presently, we are readie to give over, wee are not willing to waite. Beloved, that is one thing specially to bee remembred, wee must so farre magnifie our prayers, wee must set a price upon them so farre, and so esteeme them, and thinke them of that worth, that they will bring the thing to passe. If a man take a drugge, or a medicine, or an herbe, and use it to a wound, or a disease, once or twice, or thrice, and if hee see it doth no good, he will lay it aside, and take another medicine: for, saith he, I have tryed it, and it will doe me no good; so a man doth with his prayers: he saith, I have sought to the LORD, I have prayed for this thing twice, or thrice, and it is not granted me; and therefore he is ready to lay it aside, as if it were not effectuall, and to take another meanes: this neglect of prayer is, not to know the force of the medicine. You must know therefore of what efficacie prayer is; and trust it, and not give over (for it is effectuall to bring the thing to passe) and make not haste, but stay, and wait. It was *Sarah's* fault, when *Abraham* and shee sought to the *Lord* for a sonne, she made too much haste to give *Hagar* to *Abraham*, when as they should have stayed till the LORD had done it his owne way. So *Rebekkah*, there was a promise, and no doubt *Iacob* and shee prayed for the fulfilling of that

Waiting in prayer required.

Simile.

Instances of being over-hasty after prayer.

that promiſe; but ſhe made too much haſte, ſhe tooke a wrong way to get the bleſſing by lying; this was not waiting, but a ſtepping out to another meanes, becauſe they thought prayer and dependance upon *God* would not doe it. So *Saul* would not wait upon GOD, but hee would offer ſacrifice; this was to make haſte. And ſo it is, when a man is diſcouraged; *David*, when the thing was not preſently granted, he was ready to give over, and falls to a deſperate complaint, ſaying, *One day I ſhall fall by the hands of Saul.* Take heed of this, and when wee offer up our prayers thus, learne to know what they are, learne to truſt them, and to depend, and wait upon *God*; ſay, certainly I ſhall not be denyed, the thing ſhall ſurely be granted. 1 Sam. 27. 1.

(***)

FINIS.

The Table.

A.

Acceptable. Fol.

No naturall man can make a prayer acceptable *to God.* 9

Acquaintance.

Acquaintance *how it is gotten and loſt.* 14

Amiſſe.

We pray amiſſe *in three reſpects.* 50.

Angels.

Angels, *how they ſpeake to God, and one another.* 56

Arguments.

Arguments *in prayer of what uſe.* 45

Arguments, *in prayer ſtrengthen our faith.* 112

Arguments *uſed by the Saints of old* 121

Armour.

Prayer teacheth to uſe the reſt of our ſpirituall armour. 23

Attributes.

Attributes *of God acknowledged in prayer.* 108

Attributes *of two ſorts.* ibid.

B.

Benefit.

Prayer, the benefit *of it.* 21

Bleſſings.

Bleſſings *beſtowed upon condition we pray.* 42

Bleſſings *enjoyed without prayer uncertaine.* 47

Bleſſings *beſtowed from love & providence different.* ibid.

Bleſſings, *God deferres to beare us, to teach us to uſe them.* 63

Buſineſſe.

Buſineſſe *overmuch hinders time from prayer.* 91

Buſineſſe, *wee muſt not be too intent upon it.* ibid.

C.

Care.

Worldly care *hinders from prayer.* 38

Care *required in prayer.* 54

Carnall.

A holy man may make a carnall *prayer.* 9

Our hearts being carnall *are loth to come to God in prayer.* 37

Caſe.

Nine caſes *of Conſcience touching prayer.* 71

Change.

Prayer changeth *not God but us.* 44

Chriſt.

A man muſt have Chriſt *before God give him any thing elſe.* 102

Our prayers muſt be offered through Chriſt. 140

Our prayers granted for Chriſt. 142

What required of us to come to God in Chriſt. 144

Church.
God bestowes things on wicked men for the good of the Church. 48
Cleanse.
Meanes to cleanse *a mans selfe.* 130
Command.
It is Gods command *we should pray.* 19,77
Communion.
Communion *with God maintained by prayer.* 13
Conscience.
Conscience, *the breaches of it made up by prayer.* 78
Conscience *of sin hinders prayer.* 130
Condition.
Conditions *or qualifications of prayer,* 7. 102
Continuance, Continuall.
Continually *to pray, what.* 15
Continuall *praying, the benefit of it.* 71
Continuance *in prayer required.* 113
Continuall *praying, a note of fervency.* 118
Costly.
We should make our services to God costly. 33
Covenant.
Covenant *generall before the particular.* 102
D.
Danger.
Dangers *in omitting prayer* 6. 70
Deferre.
God defers *to answer us many times.* 60
God deferres *to answer us for foure reasons.* 64
Delay.
Delayes *must not be taken for denials from God.* 60
Desire.
Desires, *when they be good.* 4
Desires *must bee offered to God.* 6
Desires *good, whence they must rise.* ibid.
Desires *not good, without the use of meanes.* 92
See outward, see Naturall.
Dyed.
The end why Christ dyed. 19
Disadvantage.
Disadvantage *that comes by omission of prayer.* 27
Dulnesse.
Dulnesse *to prayer, two causes of it.* 57
E.
Equity.
Equity *in performing the duty of prayer.* 20
Exalt.
Who they be that God exalts. 122
Example.
Example *of the Saints a motive to prayer.* 20
Excellency.
Excellency *of man what.* 33
F.
Faith.
Faith *in Gods power and providence, the want of it hinders prayer.* 38

Faith *tryed by Gods deferring to grant our prayers.* 64
Of praying in faith, *When we want a particular promise.* 98
Faith *required in prayer, what.* 99 105
Faith *required in prayer, why.* 106
Faith *twofold.* *ibid.*
How to know we pray in faith. 113
Faith, *fervency a fruit of it.* 119

Faithfulneſſe.

Faithfulnes *of God ſtrengthens faith in prayer.* 111

Fall.

Men of great grace may fall. 67
Falls *of the godly and others differ.* 134
Falls *of the godly weaken ſinne.* *ibid.*
The hearts of Saints beſt after falls. 135

Fervency.

Fervency *required in prayer.* 115
Fervency *why requiſite.* 116
When a man is ſayd to be fervent. 117
Cautions about fervency. 118
Fervency *whence it ſprings.* 119

Fit.

The beſt way to fit *us to prayer.* 34
Staying for fitneſſe *after ſinne committed, We are more unfit.* 79

Forme.

Concerning praying after a ſet forme 80
Objectors againſt a ſet forme, *doe the ſame thing.* 81
A ſet forme *of prayer, though it it may be uſed, yet it is not ſufficient for five reaſons.* 83

Friends.

How to know that God and we are friends. 25

G.

Geſture.

Geſture *uſed in prayer.* 85

Gifts.

Prayer acknowledgeth Gods gifts. 13

God.

God, *what moves him to doe us good and evill,* 54

Glory.

Glory, *what.* 18
Glory *of God ſtrengtheneth faith in prayer.* 109

Grace.

Grace *may be prayed for in a carnall man.* 5
Grace *increaſed and exerciſed by prayer.* 13
Grace *growes by exerciſe.* 35
Grace, *why men decline in it.* 70
Grace *given to the humble.* 123
Who receive all of free grace. 125
See Fall.

Greater.

Prayer a greater matter than worldly buſineſſe. 32,89

H.

Heard.

How to know when our prayers are heard. 100

Heart.

Heart *is not bettered by cuſtomary prayer.* 30
Heart *inlarged.* 101

Heart *must bee cleansed when wee pray.* 105
Heart *must be holy in prayer.* 127
Heart *pure what?* 131

Hypocrisie.

Hypocrisie *what?* 31

Hinderance.

Time spent in prayer is no hindrance 32

Holinesse.

Holinesse *required in prayer.* 126
Holinesse *what?* 127

Honour.

Honour *that God hath by prayer.* 13

Humble, Humiliation.

God deferres to grant our requests to humble *us.* 64
The Saints begin their prayers with humiliation, *why?* 104
Humility *requisite in prayer.* 122

I.

Idlenesse.

Idlenesse *what?* 15

Image.

Image *of God increased by prayer.* 33

Impediments.

Impediments *to prayer* 7. 36
Remedy against impediments. 39

Incense.

Christ puts incense *to our prayers* 143

Indisposition.

Indisposition *to prayer.* 40,74
Indisposition *a motive to prayer.* 75
Indisposition *when it hinders not.* 76

Infirmities.

Infirmities, *how the spirit helps them* 10

Inward.

Inward *man disadvantaged by neglecting prayer.* 28
Inward *distemper, whence it is.* 29

Joy.

Joy *comes by prayer.* 22

Justice.

Justice *of God strengtheneth faith in prayer,* 109

K.

Key.

Prayer the key *that unlockes Gods treasures.* 21

L.

Little.

A little *measure may serve as well as greater.* 66
Faithfulnesse in little. 69

Love.

Love *of Christ will make us pray to him.* 24

Lusts.

Lusts, *when we pray to satisfie them* 51
When the naturall affection becomes a lust. 52
How to know we pray for our lusts 56
Luther. 35

M.

Manner.

Manner *of desiring things.* 4
God grants not prayers in our manner. 54
Manner *of comming to God.* 141

Meanes.

God effects not things by our meanes 56, 98

Meanes, *wee give too much to them.* 58
Meanes *the use of them.* 92
Meanes *must bee used for foure reasons.* 3
Wee pray to have things in use of meanes. 94
Prayer not the onely meanes. *ibid.*
Meanes, *three Cautions in using them.* 95
When we pray in faith, we are diligent in the use of the meanes. 114

Measure.

Measure *in granting our prayers.* 65
A lesse measure *of grace may serve as well as greater.* 65

Mercy.

Mercy *of God strengtheneth faith in in prayer.* 109

Misery.

The misery *of wicked men.* 18

Mistake.

If our prayers be not granted, wee mistake *in them.* 100

N.

Name.

Prayer must bee offered in Christs name, *and why?* 10, 11
How to know when wee come to God in our owne name. 143

Naturall.

Naturall *desires not excluded in prayer.* 51

Neglect.

Neglect *the cause of our wandring thoughts.* 73
Prayer must not bee neglected *after great sinne.* 77

O.

Objections.

Objections, *the removing of them helpes to prayer.* 40
Objections *against prayer 4.* 41

Occasions.

Occasions, *the variety of them hinder from prayer.* 37

Outward.

Outward *things, when the desire of them is good.* 5
Outward *man disadvantaged by neglect of prayer.* 28
Outward *things enjoyed without prayer.* 47

P.

Particular.

How far we must beleeve the granting particular *requests.* 99
Particular *sinnes must bee removed when we pray,* 104

Peace.

An holy man never at peace *with sinne.* 132
All mercies reduced to peace. 138

Person.

Person *accepted.* 102, 145
See sinne.

Powre.

To powre *out the soule what?* 8

Power.

Power *of God strengtheneth faith in prayer.* 110

Practice.

Practice *of holy men in their prayers* 129

Prayer.

Prayer *what.* 2
Prayer *of two sorts.* 3
Prayer *of wicked men howlings.* ib.
Prayer, *how expressed in Script.* 6
Prayer *right what* 9
Prayer, 8. *motives to it.* 19
Prayer *prevalent.* 22
Prayer *formall as good as none.* 29
Prayer, *when it is rightly performed.* 30
Prayer, *What we must doe in it.* 31 115
Prayer, *What makes men slight it.* 36
Prayers, *which are best.* 45
Prayers *faithfull not lost.* 71
Prayer *Why used.* 84
Prayers *when granted, and when not.* 101

Priest.

How to make use of Christ as a Priest 145

Presence.

Wee are loth to come into Gods presence, *and why.* 37

Pride.

The heart must be purged from pride *in our prayers.* 105

Promises.

Faith in Gods promises *required in Prayer.* 107

Providence.

Want of faith in Gods providence *hindreth prayer.* 38
Providence *of God may be crossed by our prayers.* 61
Faith in Gods providence *requisite in prayer.* 107

Purity.

Purity what.
See Heart. 132

Q.

Quiet.

When wee pray in faith, the minde is quiet. 113

R.

Regenerate.

Two things in a regenerate *man.* 9
Regenerate *part apt to prayer.* ibid.

Repentance.

Repentance *of particular sinnes when we pray.* 128

S.

Sacrifice.

Humility an acceptable Sacrifice. 114
Sacrifice, *what required in it.* 144

Safety.

Safety, *Wherein it consists.* 23

Satan.

Satan *hinders prayer.* 39

Short.

5. *Cautions about* shortnesse *of prayer.* 90

Sinne.

Sinnes *committed hinder from prayer.* 39
Sinnes *committed must not make us neglect prayer, and why.* 76, 77
Sinnes *increase if we recover not.* 78
Sinne, *how we must be disposed to it.* 80
Sinnes *cry louder than our prayers, till our persons be right.* 103

Sinnes *particular must bee removed when we pray.* 104
Sinne, *the conscience of it hinders prayer.* 130

Sincerity.

Sincerity *in prayer.* 120

Spira.

Spira *his case.* 6

Spirit.

To serue God in spirit, *what.* 7
Spirit *not straitned in a set forme of praier.* 82
See Infirmity.

Strength.

We cannot fit our selues to prayer by our owne strength. 36

T.

Temptation.

Temptation, *a cause of wandring thoughts.* 73

Thankefulnesse.

God requires prayer, that we might be thankefull. 14
Thankefulnes *requisite in prayer.* 137
What binders thankefulnesse. 138

Thoughts.

Case of Conscience about wandring thoughts. 72
Thoughts *wandring in prayer, foure causes of them.* ibid.
Vaine thoughts *admitted, cause wandring in prayer.* 73
Thoughts *wandring, how to prevent them.* 74

Time.

Times *of prayer, twice a day at the least,* 16
Objection touching time *spent in prayer.* 104
God grants not prayers in our time. 59
Of straitning in time *of prayer.* 88
Time *should be allowed for prayer.* 89
Time *husbanded well for prayer.* 90

Trust.

Wee trust *not God, if wee use not meanes.* 93
Wee are readier to trust *men than God.* 98

V.

Valour.

True valour, *how increased.* 135

Vnchangeable.

Vnchangeablenesse of *God strengthneth faith in prayer.* 110

Vnfitnesse.

Objections against prayer, in regard of unfitnesse. 34

Vnholy.

Vnholy *man who.* 127

Vnregenerate.

Vnregenerate *men may frame prayers as well as others.* 103

Vnthankefulnesse.

Vnthankefulnesse, *the heart must bee purged from.* 105

Voice.

Voice *used in prayer.* 84
Voice, *why used in prayer,* 86

W.

W.

Wandring, *see* thoughts.

Wants.

We must pray, though God know our wants, *and why.* 11,41.

Wee must not alway looke on our wants. 138

How to be content to want. 139

Waiting.

Waiting *required in prayer.* 146

Weakeneſſe.

Weakeneſſe *cauſe of wandring in prayer.* 71

Sinne weakened *in a godly man, and how.* 134

Will, VVilling.

VVill *accepted for the deed when.* 4

We doubt more whether God be willing, *than able.* 108

Worſhip.

Prayer required that we may worſhip *God.* 42

To worſhip *God what.* *ibid.*

VVound.

Vertue gets ſtrength by wounds. 136

VVrath.

The heart muſt bee cleanſed from wrath *in prayer.* 105

FINIS.